Dravidian India

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ASIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
NEW DELHI ★ MADRAS ★ 1995

Council of Post Graduate Teaching

SENATE HOUSE

Calcutta, 23rd November, 1923

I shall be pleased to accept the dedication of your book which I have found very interesting.

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE.

FOREWORD

This book is a valuable introduction to that important but much neglected study—Dravidian Culture and its place in Hindu Civilisation. By a fortunate coincidence I was engaged in reading Mr. Kanakasabhai's *Tamils 1800 Years Ago* and Mr. Madhaviah's rendering of *Manimekalai*—supreme pearl of Dravidian poesy, when this book was sent to me with a request that I would write a foreword. Though I fully recognise my incompetence for this task, being ignorant of Tamil, the holy language of the Dravidians, I have been persuaded by a feeling of devotion to the subject to write these few lines.

Modern scholars are agreed that the Aryans were only one of the elements, ethnic and cultural, that have gone to compose Hindu civilisation, including that part of it in which their predominance is easily presumed, our religion; and that the Dravidians and other peoples also contributed their share to the mosaic. And again the easy equation of Aryan with Brahmin, is no longer regarded as the full truth. I dare say there are yet people who think that by depreciating the Brahmin they

are depreciating the Aryan and vice versa, forgetting that the great founders of the Buddhist and Jain religions were not Brahmins, and forgetting also, as Pargiter has shown, that parts of the Rigveda and much of the Upanishads are of Kshatriya origin.

The difficulty lies in disentangling these various factors of our composite civilisation and giving them their due value. Such an analysis is bound to be largely speculative, and the east that we can expect from a historian of this subject is that he writes in the spirit of history and not of party prejudice. There are topics for dispassionate investigation to meet the ends of disinterested knowledge, and the spirit of controversy should be eschewed as far as possible. To instance one point, Vedism and Upanishadic philosophy, and Buddhism and Jainism must have been current for generations along with the indigenous cults, modifying them and getting modified in turn by them, before the Siddhanta systems were formulated ; and it would be difficult to explain this later synthesis without reference to the various bases from which or over which it arose.

However the analysis must not be given up as impossible. If English historians can disentangle the Saxon and other contributions

to the evolution of England, Indian historians may do likewise in regard to India and the various units composing it. Scholars like Mr. Kanakasabhai and the author of this book have shown how well and truly this difficult task can be performed.

Mr. T. R. Sesha Iyengar combines literary art and scientific history in a manner that engages and sustains attention. I hope this book will be but one of a series in which the whole field of Dravidian Civilisation in all its parts will be explored and presented. We, Dravidians, are proud to be shown that as between Aryan and Dravidian, if there has been borrowing on the one hand, there has been giving on the other ; that, if we received, We also gave ; that what assimilation, there has been, has been mutual and not one-sided ; and that the Hindu Civilisation of to-day is the common heritage of both.

As an Andhra, I envy Tamil its possession of two such poems as *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*, for which I can find no equivalents in Telugu Literature. Even in translation they dominate the soul like a charm. What must they be like in the original ?

C. R. REDDY

PREFACE

The place of the Ancient Dravidians in Indian History and the solid and enduring contributions they made to Indian thought and life have failed so far to receive adequate recognition at the hands of scholars. Though it may seem presumptuous on my part to intrude into a field of research which distinguished scholars have made their own, nevertheless, I have ventured to put on record a few of the facts that I have gathered during the last twelve years of study and to suggest the inquiry whether certain views have not been too hastily taken for granted with reference to the Dravidian problem. Among most writers on this subject, it has been the fashion to give to the Indo-Aryans the credit for all that was best in Ancient Indian culture. It may be admitted that the population of India is mixed beyond recognition. I am convinced that the whole complex of India's civilization—its systems of polity and philosophy, its art and institutions, and its law and religion, developed by races resulting from mixture, cannot be set down to the credit of any single constituent in the mixture.

I hold that the Dravidians have established their titles to greatness and to fame in

every sphere of human activity. In the following pages I have endeavoured to show that the contributions of the ancient Dravidians to the totality of Indian culture do not by any means form a negligible quantity. Hypotheses of the kind proposed in this book are, I am aware, viewed with suspicion and sometimes assailed with ridicule. Nevertheless, I have ventured to submit my views to the candid judgment of the public, believing as I do that the existing theories on this subject have preceded, not followed, a careful and searching study of facts. I hope I have succeeded in avoiding the danger that threatens the writer who, with an elaborate pretence of research,

"Just records
What makes his case out, quite ignores the rest,
Such an author is paid and praised for his
Untiring industry and brilliant insight ;
But there is another side to the picture :
There is plenty of 'How did you contrive to grasp
The thread which led you through this labyrinth ?
How build such solid fabric out of air ?
How on such slight foundation found this tale,

Biography or narrative ? or in other words,
How many lies did it require to make
The portly truth you here present us with?"

It is a matter of profound gratification to me that the late lamented Sir Asutosh Mookerjee was pleased to accept the dedication of this work. It is singularly appropriate, as it is a work which deals with the contributions of the ancient Dravidians to Indian culture, whose promotion and advancement lay nearest to his heart. But alas ! before the work could be actually published, he was carried off in the prime of a distinguished and glorious career to the detriment of all oriental scholarship, for which he had always evinced a warm and generous sympathy.

It remains to offer my grateful thanks to the Hon'ble Mr. G. A. Natesan, B.A., Member Council of State, Principal M. Ratnaswamy, M.A., Bar-at-Law, M.L.C., and Mr. T. Rajagopala Row, B A., of the Madras Christian College for the kind permission they have accorded to me to embody in this book those articles of mine, which first appeared in their respective periodicals. I also desire to acknowledge my obligation to Mr. C. R. Reddy, M.A., M.L.C., for his valuable Foreword.

MADRAS,
6th May 1925.
T. R. SESHA IYENGAR.

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THE ANCIENT DRAVIDIANS

CHAPTER I

THE INDO-ARYAN EPICS AND SOUTHERN INDIA

Researchers in the field of South Indian History in their laudable endeavour to reconstruct the lost early history of South India explore the pages of the two grandest Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, justly celebrated as the two unrivalled diamonds whose lustre has alone sufficed to confer imperishable and deathless glory upon the Indo-Aryan race, under the impression that a study of these works forms the starting point of all inquiry into the early history of South India. How far such an impression is justifiable, whether the epics, subjected to a thorough and searching investigation according to the accepted canons of western historical criticism, could be made to yield results valuable to the historian of ancient South India, how far the alleged hoary antiquity of the epics can be

B. C. In the opinion of Grierson, a Ramayana was current in India in the 8th century B. C. That many ancient fragments of the Mahabharata are encrusted in its modern form is irrefutable*. Nevertheless, it must be conceded that the texts of the epics in their present form do not in any way resemble the older texts supposed to have been in existence eight centuries before the Christian era.

The question then arises as to the age when the texts, in the form in which they are available at the present day, were composed, and on this subject there has been the least unanimity. Prof. Weber holds that the Mahabharata assumed its present shape centuries after the commencement of the Christian era. Dr. Buhler argues that, though it existed in the fifth century A. D., its composition should be pushed back by four to five centuries. The author of a book entitled *Transformed Hinduism* gives it as his opinion that the Mahabharata was arranged in its present form about the third century A. D. Dion Chrysostom, who flourished in the first century of the Christian era, adduces direct evidence as to the existence of the epic. Megasthenes in his *Indika* makes no reference to the epic. It is therefore surmised by some that the origin of the epic should be sought in the interval between

* James Fergusson's *Tree and Serpent Worship*, p. 58.

his time and that of Chrysostom. Mahabharata characters are referred to by Patanjali in his *Mahabhashya*, a work ascribed to the 2nd century B. C. Prof. Kielhorn observes that the epic Sanskrit and the Pali of the Jataka do not materially differ from the language employed by Patanjali. The Bisastainyopakhyana of book XIII, Chap. 93 and 94, of the Mahabharata occurs in the Pali and the Sanskrit Jataka collection with remarkable coincidences of detail, and is represented on the stupa of Bharhut which was constructed about 150 B. C. Asvaghosha, who, though living in the first century A. D., drew from older sources, alludes to many epic personages in his *Buddhacharita*. In the Pulumayi Inscription, which dates before 150 A.D., Krishna, Arjuna, Nahusha, and Janamejaya are mentioned. J. Kirste in his article on the Mahabharata question contributed to *the Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 31, expresses the view that, when Pushyamitra killed the last of the Maurya kings, Brihadratha, in 183 B.C., the Brahmanas re-established their ancient ascendancy, and the decline of the Buddhist religion followed. During this period, the Brahmanas collected all the legends of Vaishnavitic and Saivitic stamp into one large work, translating them, at the same time, from Prakrit into

Sanskrit. This was handed down orally till the second century A.D., and then reduced to writing. Thus, the period of the Indo-Scythians (45-225 A. D.) towards the close of their power witnessed, according to this high authority, the compilation of the Mahabharata epic. 'Brahmanic India, threatened by the barbarian world, gathered up the scattered treasure of her traditions and institutions, and composed their epitome in the Mahabharata and the Manava Dharmasastra, both animated by the same spirit, constructed partly from the same material, and both looking out on the same alien horizon, the Yavanas, the Pahlavas, and the Sakas.' In the opinion of Prof. Hopkins, the Mahabharata first took shape during the period 400-200 B. C.* In the Asoka edicts, the names of the Greek kings of the time of the *Diodochi* are mentioned. In the Mahabharata, heroes of the poem appear on terms of intimacy with certain Yavana kings. As the latter are referred to as ruling in the very localities in the North-West of India, which were under the sway of the Diadochi, it can safely be asserted that the compilers of the epic knew these princes as their own contemporaries, and hence established a connection

* *The Puranic Histories of the Early Aryas*, J. Kennedy, *J. R. A. S.*, 1915, p. 507.

between them and their epic heroes. From the Mahabharata we learn that the Yavana king, Bhagadatta, was an old friend of Yudhishtira's father, that the Yavana king Kascrumant was slain by Krishna, that the formidable Kalayavana shared the same fate, and that the Yavanas, the Sakas, and the Pahlavas participated in the Titanic conflict between the Kurus and the Pandavas.* These circumstances lead one to suppose that, at the time when these passages were written, collisions of the Northern Aryans with the Greeks had already happened.† It is therefore argued that the present text of the Mahabharata belongs to the period which witnessed the widespread influence of the Greeks, Indo-Scythians, and Parthians. The epic professes itself to be written down, and therefore it is contended that nothing written has been found which goes back to a time before the third century B. C. But this view of the matter has not behind it the weighty support of discerning scholars. The late lamented historian, Dr. Vincent Arthur Smith, considers that the middle of the 7th century B. C. was a period of progress marked by the diffusion of a knowledge of the art of writing in India. ‡ In the opinion

* Grierson's article on *Weber on Ahalya*, *Ind. Ant.* 1888, p. 302.

† *The History of Indian Literature*—Weber, p 188.

‡ *Early History of India*, p. 27.

of Mr. Cust expressed in the *Royal Asiatic Society Journal*, Vol. 1886, the Phoenician alphabet singles out the sixth century B. C. as the period when the Indian writing was first used extensively. It follows therefore that a written Mahabharata might have been in existence before the third century B. C. Prof. Wilson* maintains that the Ramayana should have been written about 300 B. C. Dr. Arthur A. Berriedale Keith says that there is no reason to go below a date before 300 B. C. for the kernel of the Ramayana, while the date before 500 B. C. cannot be maintained.† The author of the *Transformed Hinduism* holds that the Ramayana was composed about the fourth century B. C. On the other hand, Prof. Rapson asserts that, while certain portions of the two epics are very early indeed, the greater part of the Ramayana in its present form must date from 500 B. C., and the oldest portions of the Bharata must at least be of equal age. Dr. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar says that both the works may have to be referred to the fifth century B. C.‡ Such are some of the conflicting theories propounded by different scholars, every one of whom has established a claim to respectful hearing

* *Vide* Prof. V. Ball's article *Ind. Ant.* 1884, p. 229.

† *The date of the Ramayana J. R. A. S.*, 1915 p. 327.

‡ *The Beginnings of South Indian History*, p. 64.

by his profound scholarship in Indian antiquities.

However, the following account of the history of the national epics of India, supported as it is by the high authority of Prof. Macdonell,* seems to me to approximate more nearly to the truth than any other explanation that has so far been offered. The historical germ of the two great epics is to be traced back to a very early period, say, the tenth century B. C. Old songs about the ancient feud between the two tribes, the Kurus and the Panchalas, and about the stirring martial exploits of the heroes who played a notable part in it must have been transmitted from generation to generation by word of mouth, and recited in popular assemblies or at great public sacrifices. These disconnected battle songs were worked up by some poetic genius into a comparatively short epic describing the tragic end of the Kurus who were overthrown by the treacherous Pandavas. To this period is ascribed the conception of Brahma as the Supreme Deity. The Pali literature affords evidence to show that Brahma already enjoyed this unique position in Buddha's time. It may be admitted therefore that the original form of the Mahabharata epic was composed about the 5th century B. C. The next stage in the history

* Macdonell's *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 285.

of the epic is marked by the development of the original epic into a long poem of 20,000 slokas. In this enlarged epic the Pandavas are praised for their virtues ; Siva and Vishnu are introduced on an equal level with Brahma as Gods of the Hindu pantheon; Krishna is deified as an incarnation of Vishnu, while distinct mention is made of the Yavanas, the Sakas, and the Pahlavas. Megasthenes notes in his time the increasing prominence of the two Gods, Siva and Vishnu, and refers to the division of Hindu society into Saivites and Vaishnavites. Thus, one is irresistibly led to the conclusion that an extension of the original epic should have taken place about 300 B.C. Prof. Macdonell, in discussing the question as to the age when the Mahabharata attained the form which it at present possesses, refers to an inscription in a land grant dated 462 A. D., or 532 A. D., which proves conclusively that the epic about 500 A. D., consisted of 100,000 slokas. Prof. Macdonell points out that further researches might enable us to put back this date by some centuries. In his opinion it would not be far from the truth to say that the great epic had become a didactic compendium before the commencement of the Christian era. Thus there are three different stages in the growth and development of the Mahabharata epic, the

first belonging to the fifth century B.C., the second stage to the third century B.C., and the third stage belonging roughly to the first century B.C. In our attempt to get a correct picture of the political condition of South India, we shall confine our attention to the oldest portion of the epic *viz.*, that portion composed in the fifth century B.C.

In Ayodhya there should have been current among the court bards a number of epic tales recounting the achievements of the Ikshvaku hero, Rama. Regarding the age when the oldest part of the Ramayana was composed, it must be remembered that the original part of the poem was completed at a time when the epic kernel of the Mahabharata had not as yet taken definite shape*. The poem of Valmiki was generally known as an old work, before the Mahabharata assumed a coherent form. Prof. Macdonell points out the pre-Buddhistic origin of the original Ramayana. We receive further support from Prof. Jacobi† whose researches have reduced the original Ramayana to a volume of moderate compass. References to foreign nations like the Yavanas, Sakas, and Pahlavas are shown to

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* Macdonell's *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 306.

† *Ind. Ant.* 1894, Vol. 23, p. 54, Grierson on *Indian Epic Poetry*.

be later interpolations. Traces of Greek influence are shown to be non-existent in the original portion of the Ramayana. There is no mention of Pataliputra, though Rama was traversing the very spot where it stood in subsequent times. The society was in a patriarchal stage. Asoka's empire is not referred to at all. One is struck with the small size of the kingdoms. The original Ramayana was composed, when the ancient Ayodhya had not yet been deserted, but was still the chief city of Kosala, when its new name Saketa was unknown, and before the seat of government was transferred to Sravasti. Prof. Jacobi concludes that the oldest portions of the poem were composed before the fifth century B. C., and probably in the 6th or 8th century B. C. Notwithstanding the serious objections raised to the assumption of a high antiquity to the epic by Professors Garth and Grierson, we are forced to side with Prof. Macdonell, and say that Valmiki worked up the current legends and tales into a single homogeneous production before the fifth century B. C., say roughly in the 6th century B. C.

The original epic of Valmiki was either recited by professional minstrels, or sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, being handed down orally in the first place by Rama's

sons, Lava and Kusa. These names are considered to be pure inventions of popular etymology intended to explain the word Kusilava, bard or actor. These rhapsodists made additions in the original text to suit the tastes of the audience. The Ramayana, though it consists at present of seven books, originally consisted of five books only (II-VI). The seventh book is presumably a later addition ; for the conclusion of Book VI at one time marked the close of the whole poem. Besides, several passages in the first book are found inconsistent with the statements made in the later books. Some cantos in the five genuine books are evidently interpolations. A considerable time must have elapsed between the composition of the original poem and that of the additions ; for the tribal and the human hero of the former has been transmuted in the latter into not merely a national hero but also an *Avatar* of Vishnu. Valmiki, the author of the epic, appears as contemporaneous with Rama. A long interval of time must have elapsed for such a transformation to be effected. Prof. Macdonell is therefore convinced that the additions to the original poem were made some time after 300 B. C. We may not be far wrong, if we place the additions to the original poem approximately in the third century B. C.

Having made an attempt, however feeble and imperfect, to fix the ages of the composition of the two celebrated epics, it will be our task now to describe the political condition of India as revealed in the pages of these poems. If the conclusions we have arrived at are sound, then it follows that the outlines of a picture, however dim and shadowy, may be obtained respecting the political condition of Southern India as it appeared in different times to different authors, to Valmiki in the 6th century B. C., to the compiler of the Mahabharata in the 5th century B. C., and to the author or authors of the additions made to the Ramayana in the third century B. C.

South India in the sixth century B. C.

The story of Rama brings South India definitely into view for the first time. The Tamilians, a non-Aryan people with distinct traditions, language, history, civilization, and nationality of their own, are brought into contact with the gifted and the virile Aryans from the North. It is maintained with some warmth that the Tamilians formed an empire in the South of India and in the contiguous islands, and that prince Ravana reigned over these contemporaneously with Rama. Ravana's kingdom inCeylon was flourishing and prosperous. The settlement of the Rakshasas on the lower

Godavary valley called Janasthana formed part of Ravana's realm, and there must have been intercourse between Ceylon and Janasthana by sea*. Janasthana and Kishkhinda, the modern Hampi, in the Bellary District, ruled over by Vali, had both attained a considerable degree of civilization and prosperity so early as the 6th century B.C. The three great kingdoms of the Chera, Chola, and Pandya that played a grand, illustrious, and ever memorable, but undeservedly forgotten, part in the upbuilding of Dravidian culture and civilization were either non-existent, or not known to the poet. The rest of South India was a veritable wilderness known as the Dandakaranya. It is said that Rama on his march towards Lanka encountered no cities, no tenants of wood and cave except anchorites, monkeys, bears, vultures, imps, and demons. The Dandakaranya was infested by savages headed by monsters such as Viradha, Kabandha, Dundhubi, Khara, Dushana, and Trisiras, all of whom acknowledged the sway of Ravana, and disturbed the rites and penances of the Aryans, swallowed all the oblations offered by them to the Gods, and also stemmed the onrush of the advancing Northern Aryans. South India consisted of

* *Earliest Indian Traditional History*—F. E. Pargiter, *J. R. A S.* 1914, p. 285.

dense forests inhabited by hill and savage tribes called by Valmiki Rakshas, Yakshas, and Vanaras.

South India in the fifth century B.C.

The picture of South India presented in the Mahabharata is in marked contrast with that of the Ramayana, and exhibits a later and more advanced stage in civilization. The vast areas of wildernesses mentioned in the Ramayana have given place to large and flourishing kingdoms. There is ample reference to many South Indian kingdoms in the Mahabharata. In the Adiparva, a Pandya king is referred to as one of Draupadi's suitors. Sahadeva in his southern expedition, before the celebration of the Rajasuya sacrifice, is said to have conquered the Pulindas, and then marched into the Pandya country. We learn from the Sabha Parva LI of the Mahabharata that the Cholas and the Pandyas carried sandal oil in golden jars, piles of sandal and aloe wood from Malaya and Dardura (Nilgiris), gold, jewels, and fine textures. This is eloquent testimony to the industrial and commercial progress of the Tamil kingdoms. South India enjoyed direct communication with the rest of India. In the Sabha Parva, the kings of Kalinga, of the Andhras, and the Dravidas are mentioned. The kingdom of Vidarbha had already become conspicu-

ous among the nations of India for the splendour and magnificence of its court and other marks of progress. Agastya, the pioneer of Aryan colonisation into the south, is said to have married a Vidarbha princess known as Lopamudra. Damayanti's Svayamvara will give one an adequate idea of the grandeur and the glory which Vidarbha had attained in those early times.

South India in the Third Century B. C.

There is not much difference between the description of South India as portrayed in the enlarged Ramayana of the 3rd century B. C. and that of South India in the 5th century B. C., the only difference being that the South Indian kingdoms and people are here given a more detailed notice than in the earlier work. The epic speaks of the Deccan quite as familiarly as of the rest of India, and asserts that it was governed by kings, and organised into nations. We learn from Sugriva's geographical instructions to the monkey chiefs the names of various kingdoms in the South. Allusions are made to the kingdoms of Vidarbha, Rishika, Mahishaka, Kalinga, Kasika, Andhra, Pundra, Chola, Pandya, and Kerala. The capital of the Pandya kingdom is Kavatam, the golden beautiful city adorned with jewels and worthy of the Pandyas. Mention is made of

Musiri, a great emporium of the Chera kingdom. Svetharanyam near Puhar in the Chola territory is referred to as the place where Anthaka lost his life at the hands of Siva. The four cantos in Book IV of the original Ramayana, which, in describing Sugriva's instructions to the monkey chiefs, represent Dandakaranya as occupying only a limited portion of South India, and make copious allusions to the flourishing kingdoms of South India, are here taken to be interpolations belonging to an epoch later than the 6th century B.C., and there seems to be a general consensus of opinion in favour of this view. But some scholars contend that these four cantos formed portions of the original Ramayana itself, that Dandakaranya even in the sixth century B.C., did not extend over the whole of South India, and that therefore the existence of Dandakaranya was quite compatible with that of large kingdoms. Hence they conclude that these portions are not interpolations at all. Mr. Thomas Foulkes writes in *the Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 8, "Notwithstanding the poetical mould in which Valmiki has cast his conception of the state of the Deccan for the special purposes of his poem, he also had clearly before his mind a more real prosaic picture of its condition which was ready to be produced, when the practical side of his events

required it to be done. He has shown as distinctly that, at the very time when Rama was wandering in exile through the wilds of the Dandakaranya the Deccan, in which that *aranya* was situated, was occupied by the Vidarbhas and other nations, to all of whom emissaries were sent to search for the lost Sita. Moreover, the collocation of the Dandakaranya with the 41st Chap. of Book IV of the Ramayana shows that Valmiki regarded it as occupying a limited portion of the Deccan in the midst of these nations, but yet quite distinct from them. Dandakaranya is not spoken of as extending over the whole of the Deccan. Its existence was quite compatible with the contemporaneous existence of several strong kingdoms and of much civilization in the regions around it." Such a view implies the admission of a very high antiquity to the South Indian kingdoms. We shall only content ourselves with remarking that further researches may some day ensure the universal acceptance of this opinion of Mr. Thomas Foulkes.

Thus, we have succeeded in getting a bare outline regarding the political condition of Southern India in different periods *viz.*, 6th century B. C., 5th century B. C., and the 3rd century B. C. This division, though apparently arbitrary, has been made after an exhaustive

study of the whole literature on the subject. After all, the picture is extremely vague, and is not productive of much benefit to the student of the ancient history of the South. Much will be gained, if the prevalent faith in the high historical value of the epics for the purposes of the ancient history of the peninsula receives a rude shock. The periods, which are depicted in the epics, are more modern than the student of ancient South Indian History hopes to find, and therefore the impression that is left upon the reader's mind after a critical study of the two great epics of the Indo-Aryan race is that the future historian of ancient South India will do well to seek for his material in the numismatic, epigraphic, literary, linguistic, traditional, and archaeological records of the Dravidian people rather than in the epics of Aryan India.

CHAPTER II.

DRAVIDIAN ORIGINS.

The Ancient Dravidians were the direct ancestors of the Tamils, Malayalees, Telugus, Canarese, and other tribes now occupying the greater part of Southern India. These had planted their settlements throughout both Northern and Southern India in ancient times. The fact that several Dravidian dialects. such as Brahui, Villi, and Santal, are found stranded in the midst of other tongues in Baluchistan, Rajaputana, and Central India testifies to the once universal diffusion of the Dravidians in India.

The following is the account gathered from Indo-Aryan traditions as regards the origin of these Dravidians :—*Among the Dasyu tribes, which, according to the *Aitareya-brahmana*, were descended from the Rishi Visvamitra, are mentioned the Andhras. Manu specifies the Dravidas as among the tribes which had once been Kshatriyas, but had sunk into the condition of Vrishalas (Sudras) from the extinction

* Muir's *Sanskrit Texts* Vol. II Sec. 5, p. 422.

of sacred rites and the absence of Brahmans. In like manner the Cholas and Keralas are stated in the *Harivamsa* to have once been Kshatriyas, but to have been deprived of their social and religious position by king Sagara. In the same way, it appears that several Puranas, the Vayu, Matsya, Agni, and Brahma, claim an Aryan descent for the southern races by making their progenitors or eponyms Pandya, Karnata, Chola, Kerala to be descendants of Dushyanta, the adopted son of Turvasu, a prince of the Lunar line of the Kshatriyas. Turvasu, the Puranas say, was appointed by his father to rule over the south-east. Thus the *Harivamsa* relates, ' Yayati ', son of Nahusha, having conquered the earth with its seven continents and oceans, divided it into five portions for his sons. This wise king placed Turvasu over the south-east region. According to the legend, Turvasu, in common with most others of Yayati's sons, had declined to accede to his father's request that he should exchange his condition of youthful vigour for his father's decrepitude, and was in consequence cursed by the old man. The Mahabharata I, 3478 gives the following particulars of the curse :—' Since thou, though born from within me, does not give me up thy youth, therefore thy offspring shall be cut off. Thou fool shalt be king over those degraded

men who live like the mixed castes, who marry in the inverse order of the classes, and who eat flesh. Thou shalt rule over those wicked Mlechchas who commit adultery with their preceptors' wives, perpetrate nameless offences, and follow the practices of brutes. The Andhras Dravidas, Cholas, and Keralas, who have been mentioned in the foregoing pages as degraded Kshatriyas, or as descendants of the adopted son of Turvasu, were the inhabitants of Telingana, of the Central and Southern parts of the Coromandel coast or the Tamil country, and of Malabar respectively'. It is evident that the legendary notices referred to above do not throw any light on their origin. It will be shown in the next chapter that the languages spoken by these peoples are distinct in stock from the languages of the Aryas. If the Dravidian languages be of a stock altogether distinct from Sanskrit, it follows at least as a *prima facie* inference that the races, which originally spoke these two classes of languages, must also have been distinct from one another in their descent, and could not have belonged to the same branch of the human family.

Who, then, are these Dravidians? They are distinguished, says H. Risley, by their low stature, black skin, long heads, broad noses, and long fore-arm from the rest of the inhabit-

ants of India*. They form the original type of the population of India, now modified to a varying extent by the admixture of Aryan, Scythian, and Mongoloid elements. Topinard † divides the population of the Indian peninsula into three strata, (*viz*) the Black, Mongolian, and the Aryan. The remnants of the first are the Yenadis and Kurumbas. The second has spread over the plateaux of Central India by two lines of way, one to the north-east and the other to the north-west. The remnants of the first invasion are seen in the Dravidian or Tamil tribes, and those of the second in the jhats. The third was the Aryan'.

The Indo-African-Austral origin of the Dravidians has its supporters in Messrs. Keane and Morris. Tamilian traditions say that a large continent once existed in the Indian Ocean which was connected with South India, and which was overwhelmed and submerged by a huge deluge. The Hebrew scriptures have preserved a distinct account of an appalling deluge occasioned by continuous showers of rain for forty days and nights, coupled with the overflow of the waters of the ocean. Geological research has shown that the Indian Ocean was

* H. Risley's 'The People of India' p. 46.

† Anthropology.

once a continent, and that this submerged continent, sometimes called Lemuria, originally extended from Madagascar to Malay Archipelago, connecting South India with Africa and Australia. According to Sclater, the Dravidians entered India from the South long before the submergence of this continent. There are unmistakable indications in the Tamil traditions that the land affected by the deluge was contiguous with *Tamilakam*, and that, after the subsidence, the Tamils naturally betook themselves to their northern provinces. The assertion of the geologists that Lemuria touched China, Africa, Australia, and Comorin will only show the vast extent of the Tamil country, and can never help to dogmatise that the Tamils came from any of these now far-off regions, and settled in South India. On the evidence of the very close affinities between the plants and animals in Africa and India at a very remote period, Mr. Oldham* concludes that there was once a continuous stretch of dry land connecting South Africa and India. The aborigines of Australia have been associated by many distinguished ethnologists with the Dravidians of India. The affinities between the Dravidians and Australians have

*Quoted on p. XXIV in Vol. I Castes and Tribes of Southern India-Thurston.

been based upon the employment of certain words, and upon the use of the boomerang, by the two peoples, and upon certain correspondences in their physical types. But Sir William Turner's studies of the characters of Australian and Dravidian crania have demonstrated the baselessness of the Australian affinities of the Dravidians.

Another theory of the origin of the Dravidians is put forward by Sir William Hunter.* According to this view, there are two branches of the Dravidians—the Kolarians, speaking dialects allied to Mundari, and the Dravidians proper whose languages belong to the Tamil family. The Kolarians, who entered India from the north-east, were split into fragments by the Dravidians. The Dravidians found their way into the Punjab through the north-western passes, and pressed forwards towards the south of India. Bishop Caldwell on a comparison of the grammars and vocabularies of the Scythian and Dravidian languages, rushed to the conclusion of a relationship between the Scythians and the Dravidians. However, latest investigations show that there are marked mental and physical differences between the Scythians and the Dravidians. Besides, Caldwell's theory is based on linguistic

* Sir William Hunter's 'The Indian Empire'.

similarities which are themselves questionable. A study of the Behistun Tablets on which Dr. Caldwell depended makes it clear that the Dravidian languages are not derived from the Scythian. The absence of striking identity in the vocabulary of the Behistun Tablets and the South Indian languages and the difference in the syntactical order of words in these languages lead one to conclude that it is no easy matter to make the Dravidian languages members of the Scythian group.* Thus, the theory of Caldwell, that the Dravidians belonged to a Scythian family, and that they entered India through the north-western passes, does not rest on sufficient data. The Mongolian origin of the Dravidians is based on the fanciful philological musings of Mr. Kanakasabhai.† Sir. H. Risley dismisses all theories which assign a trans-Himalayan origin to the Dravidians. Some ethnologists consider the Dravidians to be a branch of the great Caucasian stock, and affiliated therefore to Europeans.

According to the theory of Elamite origin for the Dravidian races, India was originally occupied by two batches of Elamite invaders, one taking the sea-route by the Persian Gulf and settling on the west coast of India, and the

* South Indian Research Jan. 1919 p. 208.

†Tamil Studies, p. 32, M. Srinivasa Iyengar.

other choosing the land-route through the Bolan Pass and occupying North India. The theory is based on the puranic myths of the deluge and the Ark common to India and Elam, and on the so-called philological identity of words in Tamil and Accadian tongues. This theory* gives the Dravidians a Mesopotamian abode in the hoary past. Z. A. Ragozin† regards the connection between the Dravidians and the first Babylonian Empire—the Babylonians of Shumero-Accad before the advent of the Semites as capable of easy explanation. Archaeological evidences establish the connection of India with Persia and Assyria. The Indian oblong sarcophagi discovered at Chingleput and North Arcot resemble those of Bagdad. The author of Manimekalai ‡ enumerates five methods of disposing of the dead as prevalent in his time among the Tamils. They were cremation, exposure in an open place to be eaten by jackals and vultures, burial, stuffing the corpse in natural pits, and the covering of it up with big earthen jars. The only early nation who exposed the dead in this fashion was the ancient Persians.

Expounders of the diffusionist theory like Prof.

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* p. 105, S. Dipika, Vol. IV.

† Vide Vedic India.

‡ M. Srinivasa Iyengar's 'Tamil Studies p. 39.

Elliot Smith and Prof. W. J. Perry trace all civilized beginnings to an Egyptian and Mediterranean source. Prof. Perry* says that Egypt was the home of civilization, that the Egyptians were the master people of antiquity, that Egypt was the great source of inspiration for many centuries for the surrounding civilizations, and that the culture of Sumer and Elam was Egyptian in origin. According to this school, the main racial element in the Dravidian population is a branch of the Mediterranean race. The resemblances between the Mediterraneans and the Dravidians in the shape of skull, colour and texture of hair, colour of eyes, in features and build are striking. Those race-marks of the Dravidians, which are deviations from the Mediterranean type, are easily explained by Dr. Slater† on the hypothesis of interbreeding of the Dravidian with other types in India. According to Haeckel,‡ three of the twelve species of man—the Dravidas. Nubians, and Mediterranese—agree in several characteristics which seem to establish a close relationship between them, and to distinguish them from the remaining species. According to the diffusionist school, the Dravidians

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* Growth of civilization p. 53.

† Gilbert Slater's 'Dravidian Element in Indian Culture.'

‡ History of Creation.

migrated into India at a remote date from their original home. Prof. Grafton Elliot Smith says that sea-farers from the west from the third millennium, and especially in the period about 800 B. C., carried the heliolithic culture, mainly evolved in Egypt, but with elements gathered elsewhere, far and wide along the coasts of the Old World and the New, and mingled their blood with the aboriginal pre-Dravidian population, and the result was the Dravidians. According to James Hornell, the Proto-Dravidians were a Mediterranean people who brought into India from their original home certain boat-types found in Egypt and the Levant. These settled for some time in Mesopotamia, and then came to India, the Brahui language in Baluchistan marking their presence there at one time. They absorbed politically and linguistically the Negritoes and a Proto-Polynesian stock, whom they found in South India. The result of this fusion of the incomers with the older inhabitants is the Dravidians of the historical period. According to Prof. Perry, the carriers of Egyptian culture frequented Indian shores from 2600 B. C. onwards. According to Dr. Slater, an improvement in the methods of hunting was the cause of the Dravidian migration to India. He adds that the Dravi-

dians passed from some part of the Mediterranean basin through Mesopotamia and Baluchistan before entering India, and assigns this event to a period anterior to the dawn of Sumerian civilization. In his opinion Dravidian culture was evolved in India, and mainly under the stimulus of the Indian environment, though not without the operation of important external influences.

In this connection the remarks of Prof. Fleure deserve consideration. He says, 'We may picture survivors of early man in India influenced from the dawn of Neolithic time by immigrations of long heads, akin to those termed Mediterranean, Hamitic, and Semitic ....These immigrations may well have brought to India many improvements, lifting men above the merely hunting stage, and even giving the beginnings of agriculture........It seems justifiable to use the hypothesis that the culture elements, which thus reached India probably not less than a thousand years before the coming of the Aryans, interwove themselves with the earlier achievements of the higher races among the populations already settled in India, and that the Dravidian culture is the result'*. We shall prove elsewhere in this book

* Quoted by Dr. Slater in his 'Dravidian Element in Indian Culture' p. 40.

that this view of the Dravidian indebtedness to foreigners is grossly exaggerated.

The recent discoveries in the Punjab and Sindh have added a new horizon to Indian civilization. These are as remarkable as those of Henry Schliemann at Tiryns and Mycenae or those of Stein in the deserts of Turkestan. They open up a new historical vista, and revolutionise our ideas of the age and origin of Indian culture. A new standpoint has been at the same time obtained for surveying not only ancient Indian culture, but also the Babylonian and Sumerian cultures. This revelation has thus more than an archaeological interest. It concerns in short the history of world civilization.

Sir John Marshall* has given an account of the discoveries recently made at Harappa in the Montgomery Dt. of the Punjab and at Mohenjo-daro in the Larkana Dt. of Sindh. At both these places there is a vast expanse of artificial mounds covering the remains of once flourishing cities. At Mohenjo-daro we have besides halls, passages, and chambers, a massive structure—apparently a shrine—with walls seven or eight feet thick, pierced by many conduits which might have served the purpose of carrying off the lustral water, when the

* 'First Light on a Long—Forgotten civilization' By Sir John Marshall—The Illustrated London News Sep. 1924.

shrine or image within it was washed. We have also an altar built of small glazed bricks, and provided with a drain of similar brick-work. At Harappa burnt brick was used for building purposes. We have in both the sites new varieties of pottery, both painted and plain, some fashioned by hand, and some turned on the wheel, terracottas, toys, bangles of blue glass, paste and shell, new types of coins or tokens, knives and cores of chert, dice and chessmen, a series of stone rings, and a number of engraved and inscribed seals. Iron does not occur at all except in the latest deposits, and metal objects are scarce. The stone seals are inscribed with legends in an unknown pictographic script, and the figures engraved on them and the style of the engraving are different from anything of the kind hitherto met with in Indian art. Some of them are of steatite, others of ivory, and others of stone and paste. The animals engraved on them are bulls and unicorns. As regards the pictographs, a few points may be noticed: that the marks attached to the pictographs indicate a high stage of development, that they bear no resemblance to any known Indian alphabet, and that they bear affinity to those of the Mycenaean age in the Mediterranean area. Examples of this pictographic writing are found

both on seal dies and on certain oblong bars of copper which are perhaps coins. The curious ring stones that are found are said by Mr. Banerji to be connected with the Bhartaris or shrines of eternal fire. As regards the character of the burial customs, it may be remarked that the practice in the earliest period was to bury the body in a hunched position in a brick tomb, generally of square or oblong form. Later on, the custom obtained of burning the body and depositing the ashes in a small urn, which along with two or three others was placed inside a larger round jar accompanied by several miniature vessels containing food, raiment, and so on.

To what age and to what people do these antiquities belong? Sir John Marshall is of opinion that the period during which this culture flourished in the Indus valley must have extended over many centuries. He says 'It is possible, though unlikely, that this civilization of the Indus valley was an intrusive civilization emanating from further west. Painted pottery and other objects somewhat analogous to those from Mohenjo-daro and Harappa have been found in Baluchistan, and there are linguistic reasons for believing that it was by way of Baluchistan that the Dravidian races entered India.' Later on he says that it is more probable

that this civilization was developed in the Indus valley itself, and just as distinctive of that region, as the civilization of the Pharaohs was distinctive of the Nile. He goes on to state, 'In the case of the Indus it is probably true that successive migrations from outside had a useful effect......in promoting the development of indigenous culture; but there is no reason to assume that the culture of this region was imported from other lands, or that its character was profoundly modified by outside influences.' Thus Sir John Marshall seems to put forward two different views on the subject. The civilization according to him must be Dravidian or indigenous. In his opinion the greater probability lies in favour of the view that it was an indigenous civilization. If so, who are the people that may be said to have developed this indigenous civilization? He cannot certainly refer to the Aryan races in this way. For, it is admitted on all hands that the Aryan occupation of India was an event which was posterior to the Dravidian occupation. Besides, the Aryans might not have entered India at the period indicated by these antiquities. Are they, then, the pre-Dravidian races of India? This is improbable, since the pre-Dravidian races could not have evolved such a fine culture.

According to Mr. Banerji, this culture of the Indus valley is directly connected with the Aegean culture of the eastern Mediterranean on the ground that distinct affinities are traceable between the Minoan antiquities and those of Mohenjo-Daro, especially in regard to the painted ceramic wares and pictographic inscriptions. On the evidence indicating similarity of ritual and religious notions, of burial customs, of pottery, of ornaments, of similar art and cult objects, ((*e.g.*,) double-spouted libation vessels, the cult of a snake deity indicated by images of snakes, the double-axe symbol in a Mohenjo-Daro copper token or coin, fine egg-shell pottery), Mr. Banerji concludes that the Indian culture has close connection with Crete and the Aegean region. Thus Indo-Cretan cultural homogeneity is sought to be established by this scholar. Sir John Marshall dissents from this view.

C. J. Gadd and Sidney Smith * of the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities Department, on examining the pottery, seals, stone objects, pieces of shell inlay, clay figurines, and the brick work of unearthed buildings, find a striking resemblance between the Sumerian antiquities of the period 3000–2800

* The New Links between Indian and Babylonian Civilizations—The Illustrated London News Oct. 4, 1924.

B.C. and those of India. According to these authorities, the general trend of discovery in recent years tends to establish a close connection between the Indo-Aryans and Mesopotamians. They assert, " Somewhere between 1400 and 1200 B.C., some scribe wrote a tablet in a Mesopotamian language concerning horse training which employs words for the numerals that closely resemble the Sanskrit. About the same time, Indra, Varuna, and the twins were worshipped in Mesopotamia. Whether the fact that results from the new archaeological finds—namely that there were in India a people who had been in close contact with the Sumerians between 3000 and 2800 B.C.—should be connected with the existence of this Aryan race in Mesopotamia, or whether the earlier contact belongs to a separate and distinguishable race, we must await further discoveries to decide." Prof. A. H. Sayce,* the famous Assyriologist, finds the inscribed 'seals' or plaques brought to light at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro identical with the Proto-Elamite " tablettes de comptabilite " discovered by De Morgan at Susa, and notices striking resemblance in the form and size of the plaques, the 'unicorns', the pictographs, and numerals. The tablets

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* 'The Remarkable Discoveries in India' Illustrated London News, Sep. 27, 1924.

belong to the third millennium B. C., and extend from the age of the Babylonian king Manistusu (B. C. 2600) to that of the third Dynasty of Ur. (B. C. 2300). Prof. Sayce therefore believes that there was intercourse between Susa and the north-west of India in the third millennium B. C. According to J. M. Kennedy,* the racial connection between the Persian Gulf and the Indian peoples is traced not only through the commercial intercourse that must have existed from ancient times, but from the influence of Babylonian on Indian civilization that can be clearly traced. There was evidently a mutual exchange of ideas and things which, it is believed, was brought about through the non-Aryan tribes in western and Southern India who had been in close touch with the Ionians. The community of race, language, and religion as well as commercial interests between the races of the Persian Gulf and Western India is a subject deserving thorough research. Ragozin perceived a number of evidences jointly conclusive of an early connection having existed between the Dravidians of India and the Shumero—Accads of the First Babylonian Empire—connections for the most part of maritime intercourse established and strengthened

* 'Early commerce of Babylon with India' J. R. A. S. 1898.

by subsequent discoveries in the fields of philology and craniology* A connection between India and Babylon may be easily traced. According to the late lamented Vedic scholar, B. G. Tilak†, some Babylonian (Sumerian) names for serpents as malevolent spirits are found in the Atharvaveda. Dr. Hall says‡, ' The ethnic type of the Sumerians, so strongly marked in their statues and reliefs, was as different from those of the races which surrounded them as was their language from those of the Semites, Aryans, or others ; they were decidedly Indian in type. The face-type of the average Indian of to-day is no doubt much the same as that of his Dravidian race-ancestors thousands of years ago. Among the modern Indians, as amongst the modern Greeks or Italians, the ancient pre-Aryan type of the land has survived, while that of the Aryan conqueror died out long ago. And it is to this Dravidian ethnic type of India that the ancient Sumerian bears most resemblance, so far as we can judge from his monuments. He was very like a Southern Hindu of the Deccan, (who still speaks Dravidian languages). And it

* J. A. Saldanha—'Distribution of Races round the Persian Gulf'—Tamilian Antiquary No. 8.

† Bhandarkar Commemoration Vol. 1917.

‡ 'The Ancient History of the Near East' By H. R. Hall p. 173.

is by no means improbable that the Sumerians were an Indian race which passed certainly by land, perhaps also by sea, through Persia to the valley of the Two Rivers. It was in the Indian home (perhaps the Indus valley) that we suppose for them that their culture developed. This seems a plausible theory of Sumerian origins.' Thus Dr. Hall suggests that the Sumerians might be a branch of the Indian Dravidians, perhaps of the Indus valley. In this connection, reference may be made to the very interesting observations of His Excellency Lord Goschen—observations which must rivet the attention of all thoughtful readers of this little volume. His Excellency declared, 'It is also a moot point which further researches may resolve, whether the Ancient Dravidian inhabitants of the Southern Indian Coasts were not akin to the Sumerians. In any case, it is a most remarkable circumstance that the old King Dasaratha is claimed by the Indians and the Assyrians alike. For the old Semite chronicles demonstrate that about the year 1350 B. C. anarchy arose amongst the Mitani after the death of King Dasaratha, (Dushratta as he is called in these writings), and that as a result of the anarchy a great immigration towards the East took place, and scientists have seen the connection between this migration and the great

advance of Rama down the Gangetic Valley to Ceylon. Further excavations and researches and a re-reading of the Hindu epics and the Vedas in the light of modern research may open up enchanting vistas of fascinating history, and disentangle from the legends of old the truth which is often more marvellous than many legends and epics.'*

According to W. Crooke, there are certain striking similarities between the Indian religion (not found among the Vedic Aryans) and those of Crete and Asia Minor. The worship of the great Mother-Goddess is an instance in point. According to Ananda Coomaraswamy, a number of decorative motifs and cult figures from the Aegean region are found in northern and southern India in a striking manner. Dr. Sunitikumar Chatterji shows that the word Dramila was used to represent the Tamil land in Proto-Dravidian or primitive Dravidian of the early centuries of the first Millennium B.C. The Lycians of Asia Minor, whose original home was Crete, in their funerary inscriptions call themselves Trmmili. Trmmili therefore was an old name which was used in Crete to denote a section of the Cretan people. Dr. Chatterji identifies this Trmmili with the

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* Lord Goschen's address in opening the III Session of the Oriental Conference at Madras, December 22, 1924.

Dravidian Dramila, and says that this is one more point to prove that the original Dravidians were a ramification of the old Aegean race. The languages of the Sumerians and Elamites have certain resemblances in phonetics and structure with themselves and with Dravidian and Lycian. Dr. Chatterji therefore suggests that Cretan, Lycian, Sumerian, Elamite, and Dravidian languages might be mutually related, and that the Aegean islands, Asia Minor, and Mesopotamia might have originally formed one cultural area. To sum up, in the opinion of the various authorities here cited, the Dravidians seem to have been originally a Mediterranean people. It will be easily conceded that the people, who evolved the Punjab and Sindh culture, should have been a non-Aryan, presumably, the ancient Dravidian, people, since at the period assigned to this culture, the Aryans could not have entered India. Mr. Banerji is also inclined to this view.

We also find striking resemblance between the finds of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro and those of Adichanallur and other pre-historic sites in South India. We shall examine some of these South Indian pre-historic sites. Three-and-a-half miles to the north-east of Chittoor, we have the ancient sepulchres

called Panduvaram Dewal* in a secluded valley hemned in by rocks. There are three large tombs in tolerable preservation and surrounded by the remains of many others. The most perfect of the three lies to the north-east of the group crowning the summit of a high boss of bare rock. It consists of an enormous nearly square slab of granite laid flat on the bottom. This forms the floor. Four similar slabs, placed vertically on it on their edges, constituted the sides. Another, still larger, placed horizontally on their top, forms an overhanging roof. The tombs are usually surrounded by one or two circles of stones placed upright on their edges. The stones at the head and foot of the tombs are higher usually than the rest. Through one of the side slabs is cut a circular aperture large enough to admit a moderate-sized man's body. The sarcophagi containing the bodies are placed on the floor-slab, and are covered to the depth of three or four feet with earth. Besides, these sepulchres on the hill, there are also the sepulchres on the base. At about a foot below the surface, we come to the top of the terra-cotta sarcophagus, and it was a coffin-shaped trough rounded at the extremities, and deeply rimmed at the edges. It was filled with hard earth

* Old Series Vol. 13, J. R. A.S., Ancient Sepulchres of Pandu Varam Dewal in S. India—Captain Newbold.

and human bones. There were fragments of a skull, pieces of pottery, a small elegantly shaped vase of fine black clay filled with ashes and earth, spear-heads and swords of an antique fashion, and masses of crumbling rust under the sarcophagi. The absence of the remains of a city in the vicinity may indicate the high antiquity of these cyclopean sepulchres. The pottery unearthed is of a fine description. The builders of these monuments were acquainted with the art of smelting and working iron.

Mr. Alexander Rea made excavations at Adichanallur*, 15 miles south-east from Tinnevelly. The burial-ground here covers an area of 114 acres, and is the most extensive and important yet discovered in South India. The funeral urns were deposited either singly or in pairs in pits excavated in the solid rock or in the gravelly soil. In most cases only a selection of bones appears to have been interred, and as there are no evidences of cremation, it seems probable that only portions of the body were placed in each urn, a theory which is supported by the small size of many of the latter and the narrowness of their mouths. The burial urns and other articles of pottery resemble the finds of other South

*'Catalogue of the pre-historic Antiquities from Adichanallur and Perumbair' by Alexander Rea—J. R. Henderson's Preface.

Indian localities. The smaller articles are mainly domestic utensils together with stands of various kinds on which vessels were placed. The most interesting of the finds are the objects in metal which exist in great variety. A considerable amount of skill has been exercised in their manufacture. The majority are of iron, but a fair number occur in bronze. The only objects discovered in any of the precious metals are oval frontlets of gold leaf which were probably tied round the forehead in the case of some of the dead, possibly those of rank. The iron articles include swords, daggers, spear-heads, arrow-heads, and other weapons used in warfare or hunting, agricultural implements, and tridents. No implements or weapons have been found in bronze; all objects in this metal being either vessels of curious and varied shapes, or personal ornaments such as rings, bangles, and bracelets. The bronze articles are executed with higher skill than those in iron, and they afford the best evidence of the art of the people who fashioned them. This particularly applies to the numerous representations of buffaloes with wide-curved horns arranged on complicated metal frame works, some of which formed supports for spherical vessels, while others were elaborately decorated lids. The animals can

be easily identified. Cow and other animals, distinctive of Aryan mythology, are not represented. Besides, there were unearthed large numbers of pottery vessels, stone implements, and collections of bones.

The comparative rarity of bronze objects and their use for personal ornaments show that this metal must have been scarce, highly valued, and used only by the higher class of people. Thus the people in those days were skilful in moulding pottery, in casting or working metals, in weaving, and in working stone and wood. The ornamentation of the pottery consists only of embossed dots and incised lines in triangular or simple geometrical designs. According to Foote, there has been a true evolution in the potter's craft which attained a stage of very real beauty. The bronzes exhibit a high degree of skill in workmanship and manipulation of the metal, while the same may be said of the iron implements. * The people knew how to forge iron into shapes for daily use both in agriculture and warfare. Dr. Caldwell thinks that the Tamil word for an urn is Tali (தாழி). He thinks that the sepulchral urns are relics possibly of a higher antiquity than the Christian era. At

* Pre-historic Burial Sites in South India, R. Sewell—J. R. A. S. 1902.

the time when these urns were used, cremation must have been unknown, and burial the universal practice. This practice continued even in the historical period, as will be seen by a careful study of *Purapporulvenbamalai.*

* Numerous megalithic monuments are found in Coimbatore. These are all sepulchral consisting of Kistvaens or tumuli containing cists or chambers originally underground, but now exposed. The ground near the village of Nallampatti rises into one of the wide rolling barren maidans characteristic of South India, on which a great cairn cemetry is situated. Many hundreds of cairns are spread over a considerable tract. The larger cairns are surrounded with circles of upright stones. In the centre of the tomb was placed the highest of all the tombs. Pottery surpassing in design and texture that of the present day was found in large quantities. It is ornamented with straight or wavy streaks of two or three light tints. One form of the cairns is a tall narrow urn standing on three or four legs often three feet high. The urns contain fragments of burnt human bones. Single-footed cups often occur. Iron was the only metal found in this burial place. Other objects met with in this

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* **Megalithic monuments of the Coimbatore Dt. by J. M. Walhouse—1875 J. R. A. S.**

cemetry were a necklace of small shells, and crores of wrist bangles. We have a group of cairns situated on land two miles to the north of the village of Sirumugai and eight miles from Mettupalayam. The urns excavated here were about 4 feet in hight and about 2½ feet in diameter at their greatest width. The excavator found the remains of human skulls and bones, corroded iron implements, pottery, domestic vessels, a few beads, a few stone flakes, drinking cups, and rice bowls. The pottery of the cups and bowls is of excellent quality, red in colour, but mostly covered with a false black glaze. The four-legged urns of the type found here have also been found in ancient graves at Perumbair and Pallavaram in the Chingleput district, at Adichanallur in the Tinnevelly district, and in certain rock-cut tombs discovered on the west-coast. In the opinion of Mr. Longhurst, the presence of iron and stone implements in one and the same burial urn may show that these tombs go back to the early iron age, when large numbers of people continued to use stone implements long after iron was known†. The excellent workmanship shown in the beads, and the

† A Report on the Excavation of certain cairns in the Coimbatore — District by Longhurst-Annual Archæological report, Madras 1913—1914.

high quality of the domestic vessels, together with the numerous remains of iron weapons or implements, clearly show that the people, who made these quaint tombs for their dead, were a highly civilized race of an advanced type.

A large mound near Chingleput is surrounded by a number of megalithic graves, and believed to have been inhabited by a bearded race of 'Pandayar'. The very name of Pandu houses, by which the tombs are familiarly known in every district, points to primitive pre-Brahmanical times and beliefs ; all that is referred to about the Pandavas being directly opposed to Brahmanical rites and ideas, and savouring rather of aborginal practices.* At Perumbair, † in the Chingleput district, the ancient burial sites of the people are indicated on the surface by circles of rough stone boulders, and in the centre of each circle at the depth of from two to seven feet was found either a pyriform urn or an earthenware cist. The contents of these graves were pottery, stone objects, a few iron implements, and some chank shell ornaments. The pottery is of a coarser fabric than that of Adichanallur. The

*Megalithic monuments of the Coimbatore Dt. by M. J. Walhouse J. R. A. S. 1875.

† Preface of J. R. Henderson-Catalogue of the Prehistoric Antiquities from Adichanallur and Perumbair.

dolmens on the Coromandel Coast near Kollur, four miles from Tirukoilur, are noteworthy. The Araikandanallur* pagoda near Tirukoilur is a striking object built on a rock, and is remarkable on account of the existence of five singular cells cut in the solid rock, where local traditions say the five Pandavas lived during their exile. In one of the structures were found some fragments of bones and some scraps of iron. There is ground for presuming that these structures were used as burial places.

These megalithic monuments in general resemble those of Adichanallur. It may be presumed that these monuments were built by the Dravidian races of South India. Dr. Chatterji believes that the Old Stone Age weapons found in different parts of India, belonged to the Negritos, the oldest Indian people in his opinion, and that the New Stone Age implements were the work of the ancestors of the Kols. In his opinion the culture type, presented by the finds in the Adichanallur tombs, where articles of bronze and iron were obtained, and the burial customs therein indicated, resemble those of Crete, Cyprus, Anatolia, and Babylonia. He recognises the closer affinities of Adichanallur tombs with those of Crete and

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* See Indian Antiquary Vol. 5.

Cyprus in the crouching position of the dead-body, in the Sarcophagi, and in the golden masks and ornaments. But what is more important to our immediate purpose is to note the fact that the tombs of Adichanallur and those of Perumbair, Coimbatore, and other places in South India, which we have just now examined, bear resemblance to one another in some respects, though not in all, and that the megalithic monuments of all these places are situated in South India, a part of the country which is predominantly Dravidian. M. Lapicque arrived at the conclusion that the remains at Adichanallur belonged to a Proto—Dravidian race. Some of the large earthenware urns excavated by Mr. A. Rea at the prehistoric burial site at Adichanallur contained human skulls in a perfect condition. * These skulls have been found, on being measured, to agree with the typical Tamil skull. It is therefore contended that the bronze and iron age culture of Adichanallur is that of the early Dravidians. It may also be further maintained that the culture, represented by the other megalithic monuments of South India noticed above, is also that of the ancient Dravidians. The Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa culture

* Dr. Sunitikumar Chatterji, The Modern Review, Dec., 1924.

agrees with that of Adichanallur in burying the dead in a crouching position in terracotta coffins, and in placing food, drink, wearing apparel, and weapons ready for their service, when they reached another world. Cremation was commonly practised by the Aryans in India. Hence the burial customs indicated in the Harappa and Mohenjo—Daro monuments show that their builders should have been un-Aryan, possibly Dravidian. According to Prof. Rapson, the original speakers of the Dravidian languages were invaders. The survival of a Dravidian language in Baluchistan must indicate that the Dravidians came into India through Baluchistan in pre-historic times. Whether they are ultimately to be traced to a Central Asian or to a Western Asian origin * cannot at present be decided with absolute certainty ; but the latter hypothesis receives very strong support from the undoubted similarity of the Sumerian and Dravidian ethnic types†. To sum up, we have endeavoured to show that, according to many able and erudite scholars cited above, the recent discoveries in the Punjab and Sindh have shown that the Dravidian civilization of India bears striking

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* See Modern Review, 1925, p. 357 No. 3.

† Cambridge History of India Chapter II, Vol. I.

resemblance to the culture developed in the Mediterranean area. This leads to the inference, in the opinion of these scholars, that the original home of the ancient Dravidians should have been the Mediterranean region.

Thus far we have sketched the theories propounded by the scholars of the East and the west about the original home of the ancient Dravidians being somewhere else than in India. We shall now discuss what might be called the indigenous theory. According to this theory the Dravidians should have lived in South India from the earliest times. This is almost a faith with the Tamils, a typical Dravidian people. We shall strike the mine of ancient Tamil literature to see if its contents shed any light on this indigenous theory. We shall later on demonstrate beyond the possibility of a doubt the high antiquity of Tamil literature. We shall here simply note that the *Tolkappiyam* and some poems of the *Purananuru* are all very ancient and anterior to the Christian era.

In the oldest extant Tamil classics there are no traditions pointing to a home outside the Tamilakam. The oldest Tamil works are full of word-pictures of the blazing sun that burns[1], the stalwart trees that

(1) Puram 6–43.

shade[1], the ferocious beasts that roam[2], the bright plumed birds that fill[3], in the torrid South Indian peninsula. When there are words for dews and mist, there are none for snow or ice. The oldest Tamil classics always welcome coolness everywhere, and avoid everything that smacks of heat. There is nothing in Tamil to answer to the cold regions of the Asiatic table-lands, to the ice-bound polar plains, or to the vine growing, fig shadowed Chaldean regions. Animals like the elephant or the tiger[4], birds like the peacock or the parrot[5], grains[6] like thinai (தினை, Italicum panicum) and Varahu (வரகு, Paspalum frumentaceum), and trees[7] like Vengai (kino-tree) are characteristic of the Tamil hills and plains, and not indigenous to any country outside India[8]. Greece, Syria, and Babylon were ringing with the fame of Tamilakam in ancient times, and came to her for her teaks, and sandals, her pearls and muslins, and her peacocks and pepper. The

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(1) Kali 39–41. Ainkurunuru 189, 219.
(2) Puram 152, Kali 38–43.
(3) Kali 37–108 ; Puram 13–50.
(4) Puram 151–152, Kali 40–42.
(5) Kali 37—108, Ainkurunuru 260.
(6) Kali 37—39 Puram, 197.
(7) Puram 3, Kali 117.
(8) *Vide* Tamil Classics and Tamilakam By S. Bharathi S, Dipika, Vol. 14, No. 1.

earliest Tamil works describe the physical features of the semi-pastoral Tamil people and their life in Tamil India so accurately and lovingly that their love for and intimate acquaintance with Tamilakam is apparent in every verse. The Tamil land is invariably divided by all the early poets into its five most natural divisions (ஐந்திணை). The special features and peculiar genius of Tamil literature, which accurately photographed the characteristics of the Tamils, arrested the attention of the Aryans with the result that the latter seriously commenced studying all about the Tamils and their culture even in the early centuries of the Christian era. That Kapilar, a member of the Third Academy at Madura, composed a whole poem entitled *Kurinjippattu* (குறிஞ்சிப்பாட்டு) to impart to the Aryan Prince Brahaththan all about the life of the Tamils and the fauna and flora of the Tamil country is well-known. The Tamils always believed that from the outset they were the aborginal inhabitants of the great territories bounded by the two seas on the east and west, and by the Venkata hills on the north, and the submerged rivers, Pahruli and Kumari on the South * The word Tamil occurs in all the ancient Tamil classics as the common or generic name for the people and

* *See* Tolkappiyam; Arangerrukathai, line 37, Sil; Puram 6.

their language in India. The word is as old as the Tamil language, and hence there is no need to derive it from foreign words like Dravida.

The antiquity of the Tamil civilization is undoubted. Patanjali's Mahabhashya, Katyayana's Vartika, Asoka's inscriptions, the writings of Megasthenes, the Ceylon chronicles like Mahavamso and Dipawamso, all these lead one to the conclusion that the Pandyan kingdom should have attained a great civilization in the centuries anterior to the Christian era. The first Aryan stranger, who travelled south across the trackless jungles, was dazzled with the splendour of the Royal Pandyan Court, 'and he was not too proud to seek shelter in the hospitable Tamil land that smiled to a sunny clime'. Dr. Macleane says that the Dravidians are a very primeval race, and that they are indigenous to India, and specially indigenous to South India. The antiquity of the Tamil civilization and the references in the earliest extant Tamil classics make it probable that the original home of the Dravidians is Tamilakam itself.

We know that the adventurous Tamils founded trading settlements in Chavakam (Java), and in Kadaram (Burma). It may be that some gallant sailor founded

settlements on the coasts washed by the waves of the Mediterranean and Arabian Seas. It is quite possible that Dravidian traders might have carried their culture from South India to the Mediterranean area. And yet Dr. Chatterji says, 'The Dravidians look like being a Mediterranean people coming out of Crete and passing through Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, where they were in close touch with the Sumerians and the Elamites: and possibly these latter were related to them and the Cretans. Then they came........into Sindh, whence they spread into the interior of India'. Why should this have been so? Could not an exactly reverse process have taken place? It may not be hazardous to remark that we shall have to revise our notions with regard to the assessment of the full influence of the Dravidians on the evolution of Asiatic and of European cultures. Sir John Marshall himself admits that five thousand years ago the peoples of Sindh and the Punjab were living in well-built cities, and were in possession of a relatively mature civilization with a high standard of art and craftsmanship and a developed system of writing. He also puts forward a very important suggestion—supremely important from the point of view of cultural origins—that, if the Sumerians are to be regarded as an intrusive

element in Mesopotamia, then India may prove eventually to be the cradle of Sumerian civilization, which in its turn formed the bedrock on which the magnificent superstructure of Babylonian, and Assyrian, and West Asiatic culture generally rested.

We shall here try to show that this view need not be regarded as entirely fanciful. Let us again quote Dr. Hall. He says, 'It is by no means impossible that the Sumerians were an Indian race which passed to the valley of the Two Rivers. It was in the Indian home (perhaps —the Indus valley) that we suppose for them that their culture developed. Then their writing may have been invented, and progressed from a purely pictorial to a simplified and abbreviated form, which afterwards in Babylonia took on its peculiar 'Cuneiform' appearance owing to its being written with a square-ended stilus on soft clay. On the way they left the seeds of their culture in Elam.' In the opinion of Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, neolithic culture began in India about 20,000 years ago, and was widespread in all Indian river-valleys. Elementary Tamil words are all monosyllables, such as can very well be represented by the pictographic script d scribed by Sir John Marshall in his letter to the 'Hindu' announcing the now famous Harappa and

Mohenjo-Darô discoveries. Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar believes that this ancient neolithic culture went beyond the confines of India, possibly by sea, and settled in Ancient Assyria as the Sumerian culture, (whence the civilization of Chaldea sprang). The well-known resemblance of facial features between the present day Tamils and the ancient Sumerians is therefore not a mere accident *

That our view of South India being the probable home of civilization is not entirely a baseless fabric of a dream receives support from Dr. Chatterji who says, 'It would be established,' provided Hall's theory of Sumerian origins be true, 'that civilization first arose in India, and was associated probably with the primitive Dravidians. Then it was taken to Mesopotamia to become the source of the Babylonian and other ancient cultures which form the basis of modern civilization.' A Scientist† writes that the locality of the origin of the earliest race from recent researches appears to have been on lands submerged beneath the Indian Ocean. According to Sir Walter Raleigh ‡ India was the first planted and peopled country after the flood. It

* Vedic culture—Its Antiquity Oct. 27, 1924, 'The Hindu,'—P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar.

† 'Science of Man', Australia, December 1900.

‡ 'History of the World' p. 99.

has been already stated that South India was contiguous to the submerged continent. According to Sir John Evans*, Southern India was probably the cradle of the human race. Investigations in relation to race show it to be possible that Southern India was once the passage ground by which the ancient progenitors of Northern and Mediterranean races proceeded to the parts of the globe which they now inhabit. Human remains and traces have been found on the east-coast of an age which is indeterminate, but quite beyond the ordinary calculations of history........The people who have for many ages occupied this portion of the peninsula are a great people influencing the world, not much perhaps by moral and intellectual attributes, but to a great extent by superior physical qualities.† Hence we shall not be far wrong if we infer that South India gave a refuge to the survivors of the deluge, that the culture developed in Lemuria was carried to South India after its submergence, and that South India was probably the cradle of the post-diluvian human race. As the centre of gravity of the Dravidian peoples, as determined by the density of their

* Presidential Address of the British Association, 1897—Science of Man Aug. 1901.

† Dr. C. Macleane's Manual of Administration of the Madras Presidency.

population, lies somewhere about Mysore, South India must be considered as the home of those peoples, whence they might have spread to the north

In our inquiry regarding the probable primeval home of the ancient Dravidians, we notice two definite schools of thought emerging out of the interminable discussions and endless controversies. It seems to us that the arguments advanced on behalf of the indigenous theory are unanswerable. But at the same time it must be remembered that the profundity of scholarship and learning displayed by the advocates of the opposite view, (*viz.*) that the Dravidians came to India from outside, is remarkable. To brush aside the weighty opinions offered by this school which counts among its adherents some of the most distinguished scholars of our time will not be doing justice to this all-important subject. Nevertheless, it is perhaps not too bold to assert that future discoveries and dispassionate researches may ultimately lead to the universal acceptance of the view that the Dravidians were living in South India from the remotest antiquity.

* Govindacharya Swamin's article p. 228. Ind. Ant. 1912.

Chapter III

DRAVIDIAN GLORIES

1. Introduction.

Historians of India, not resting content with celebrating the triumphs of the Aryan stock and culture and virtues in the movement of Indian history, make all other movements converge towards the Aryan movement as towards a centre, and claim the final hegemony for the Indo-Aryan race. An endeavour will here be made to show that this creed of Aryanism in Indian history is not wholly tenable. This object can best be attained by describing in brief outline the glories of the ancient Dravidians who played a not unimportant part in shaping and moulding the history of South India in far-away ancient times. Our object in offering this humble contribution is to set before the reader a truer conception of the place of the Dravidians in South Indian history, their distinctive culture, their solid and lasting contributions to the development of Indian thought and life, and the profound and far-reaching influence they exercised upon some of the great nations of antiquity.

Though we are conscious that the attitude here taken is diametrically opposed to the long-cherished theories and deep-rooted convictions of savants, we nevertheless venture to put forth our views for what they may be worth, in the hope that at least the first step may be taken in the overthrow of Aryan bigotry and pride and in the recognition of the rich heritage with which the Dravidian forebears enriched, strengthened, and improved the culture of Aryan India. That the Dravidian race possessed a genius and an individuality of its own, that it made great contributions to the development of the Indo-Aryan race in different spheres of human activity, and that it was out of the harmonious commingling of the cultures of the Dravidian and the Indo-Aryan that the Hindu civilization of the present day has been evolved, these truths, it is hoped, will soon pass out of the stages of ridicule and of indifference, and in the fulness of time receive adequate recognition at the hands of scholars.

2. Dravidian Languages.

Reviewing Dr. Slater's 'Dravidian Element in Indian Culture', the 'Times Literary Supplement' asserted "........The Diffusionists have as yet scarcely approached the problem from its linguistic side, and good Sanskritists do not yet

appear to recognise a Dravidian element in their texts. Dr. Slater does indeed suggest the need of examining the words common to Sanskrit and the Dravidian languages in order to ascertain by comparison with the Indo-European vocabulary to what extent Sanskrit is indebted to Tamil and its sister-tongues. Such an inquiry might undoubtedly prove most valuable, and throw a flood of light on cultural beginnings. Another necessary task is the examination of Sanskrit literature in the light of Diffusionist ideas. Indeed, it would be pleasantly ironical, if the philologists proved as mistaken over the origins of Indian culture, as they were over the paternity of the Indian population. Time was when they claimed the peoples of Northern India as predominantly Aryan in blood. They may hereafter be obliged to throw overboard other lumber, besides their old notion that language was a satisfactory indication of race.' This is just exactly the view we have undertaken to establish in the following pages.

In a paper read before the Third Session of the Oriental Conference held at Madras, Mr. R. Swaminatha Iyer declared, 'The class of words known as 'pronouns' belong to the most fundamental elements of a language. I propose to bring together in this paper a body of facts

which seem to show unmistakably that the Demonstrative, the Relative, Interrogative, and the Reflexive pronouns of the Dravidian languages are of Aryan origin, that their personal pronouns have some Aryan affinities, and that most of the gender and number signs in these pronouns are also of Aryan origin. These facts are totally opposed to the assumption made by western scholars that the Dravidian languages had attained their development long before the arrival of the Aryans in India and to the current Dravidian theory of which that assumption is, as it were, the sheet anchor....Bishop Caldwell maintained that the Dravidians....were Turanian immigrants, that the Dravidian languages had become fully developed long before the arrival of the Aryans in India, that these languages had no structural relationship with Sanskrit, that their affinities were mainly Turanian, occasionally Semitic, and that, where the affinities were Aryan, these did not come into existence on Indian soil, but belonged to the pre-Aryan period of the pre-historic past, when the Indo-Europeans and Turanians were living as one undivided race.'

Mr. Swaminatha Iyer has arrived at conclusions, which in his opinion knock the bottom out of this Dravidian theory. He asserts that

most of the suffixes, employed in the Dravidian languages for the purpose of indicating the tenses and modes of verb-forms, are of Indo-Aryan origin. The personal terminations of Dravidian finite verbs and the pronouns, of which these terminations are early forms, are also most of them of Aryan origin. The basic portion of the Dravidian vocabularies consists largely of words of Indo-Aryan origin. The Dravidian languages are in all their present essential features a creation of Aryan and Aryanised immigrants from the north. The existence in Tamil of words and forms, which are met with in the Vedas and the Avestic language, but have disappeared from the post-Vedic Indo-Aryan tongues, would show that these immigrants must have separated from the main body of the Indo-Aryans in the North-West in pre-historic times—in the Pro-Vedic or even pre-vedic period. The Dravidian civilization of the South is merely the civilization of these Aryan and Aryanised immigrants. As regards the alleged influences of the Dravidian languages on Indo-Aryan phonology, grammar, and Syntax, the fact is that what are called Dravidian characteristics in Indo-Aryan phonology and inflectional system are really Indo-Aryan characteristics in Dravidian. Such in brief is a summary of the

conclusions arrived at by Mr. R. Swaminatha Iyer on this much-vexed question of the origin of Dravidian languages.

Mr. R. Swaminatha Iyer says, 'In analysing the Dravidian forms avan, aval, avar, and avai, it is usual to take the consonant v as a euphonic letter joining the initial letter a with the first vowel of the terminations an, al, ar etc. That this consonant is not euphonic but radical appears from the circumstance........that the Tamil words av-yanai, 'that elephant' and i-v-an 'this man' cannot be explained on the basis of the euphonic theory. But according to Pandit Savariroyan * v is simply an euphonic particle inserted as for example in the word çeydavan to prevent the hiatus between the contiguous vowel and the initial vowel in the termination (çeyda + v + an). We see in Tamil that every finite verb in its primitive stage is an appellative noun composed of two words—a relative participle and a pronoun. It is true that an, al, ar, du, and a are now used as terminal suffixes; but they were originally pronouns themselves meaning he, she, they (persons), it, they (things), because a (v)-an, a (v)-al, a (v)-ar, a-d-u, a (v) a (now a-vai) literally mean not, he, she, it etc., but that-man, that-woman, those-persons, that-thing and

* Vide S. Dipika p. 190, Vol. III.

those-things. Again Mr. Swaminatha Iyer says, 'There is also a demonstrative an which appears in Tamil verbal forms, irundanan, irundanal, where the terminations anan, anal correspond to avan, aval etc.' But according to Pandit Savariroyan, n has a distinct office to perform in combination, (*viz*) that of producing euphony. In the word çeyda(n) an (செய்தனன்), between the primitive word çeyda and termination an, the nexus is inserted to prevent the hiatus. Therefore, there is no need to regard anan as a termination. There are other considerations which make it difficult to accept Mr. Swaminatha Iyer's conclusions. Besides, philology is a slippery and dangerous ground on which we have to tread with eyes and ears open. The science of philology deals with a greater amount of guess work than any other department of scientific investigation. In philological matters, there can be no absolute proof. Hence we have to proceed with considerable amount of caution in establishing theories based on philological considerations alone. While we hail with pleasure the contributions of a competent philologist to questions so large and so important in the eyes of students of Dravidian antiquities, we yet have to record our conviction that the theory of Mr. R. Swaminatha Iyer that the

Dravidian languages are a creation of Aryan and Aryanised immigrants from the north, and that the Dravidian civilization of the South is merely the civilization of these Aryan and Aryanised immigrants, will not find ready and general agreement.

Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Canarese (*i.e.*) the Dravidian languages are all fundamentally different from Sanskrit, the language of the Aryans. These languages, while they have a common origin and a close affinity to each other, are different from Sanskrit and its derivatives. The northern pandits classify the vernacular dialects of India into two sets of five, the five Gauras and the five Dravidas consisting of the Maratha, Gurjara, Telinga, Karnataka, and Dravida. Of the latter, the first two belong to the northern group; while the last three are not, as the northern pandits suppose, derived from Sanskrit like the northern dialects, but, as regards their original and fundamental portion, are quite independent of Sanskrit. The difference between the northern and southern dialects lies in this, that, though the northern ones contain a small proportion of non-Sanskrit words, they are mainly composed of words derived from Sanskrit, while the Tamil, Telugu, and other southern languages, though they contain a certain

proportion of Sanskrit words, are, as regards the great bulk of their vocabulary, genius, and spirit, distinct from Sanskrit, the classical speech of the Aryas. * No person, who is well versed in comparative philology, and who has compared the primitive and essential words and the grammatical structure of the Dravidian languages with those of Sanskrit, can imagine for a moment that the former have been derived from the latter by any process of development or corruption. † Sanskrit may contribute to the polish of the South Indian languages, but is not necessary for their existence. The non-Sanskrit portion of the Dravidian languages exceeds the Sanskrit portion. Pronouns and numerals of the Dravidian languages, their mode of inflecting verbs and nouns, the syntactic arrangement of their words—all things which constitute the essential structure of a language are essentially different from those of Sanskrit. The base of Tamil, the most highly cultivated as regards its original structure of all the Dravidian languages, has an independent origin. ‡ § In

* *Vide* Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Part II; Caldwell's *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*, p. 42.

† *A Grammar of the Teloogoo Language* by A. D. Campbell, p. 2.

‡ Wilson's *Catalogue of the Mackenzie Collection*, p. 19.

§ Remarks of Babington and F. W. Ellis quoted in Wilson's *Mss.*, p. 18.

its more primitive words, such as the names of natural objects, the verbs expressive of physical action or passion, and the numerals, it is unconnected with Sanskrit. The Tamil language retains an alphabet which tradition affirms to have heretofore consisted of but sixteen letters, and which has several letters of peculiar powers. Tamil is not dependent on Sanskrit for the full expression of thought. The ancient or classical dialect of this language, the Sen Tamil, is almost entirely free from Sanskrit words and idioms. The finest works in Tamil, such as the *Kural*, are original in design and execution, and also almost independent of Sanskrit. According to Dr. Burnell, the science of grammar (vyakarna) was cultivated in the south from a very early period, not as derived from Sanskrit, but as communicated from a divine source, in other words, as being of indigenous origin. Prof. Julien Vinson says, "Tamil and Sanskrit in spite of some analogies of words have no connection whatever. Their grammatical systems so widely differ that they certainly proceed from quite different origins. They are only to one another what a cocoa tree would be to a carrot plant."*

The Tamil language has an originality and a singularity of its own. The distinction

* *The Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. 5, p. 31.

between Vadamoli (வடமொழி) and Tenmoli (தென்மொழி) could have arisen only when there were two languages standing side by side, one in the north and the other in the south, both coming in contact with each other. The following peculiarities among others lend countenance to the position that Tamil must be a language independent of any other:—In Tamil, grammar, gender, and number are treated under one head Pal (பால்), peculiar to the Tamil language. The indications of tense, present, past, and future by the doubling of the root by affixes and inter-letter (இடை நிலை) for each tense are other peculiarities not found elsewhere. Gender in Sanskrit is upon words. Gender upon meaning of words is peculiar to Tamil, and not found in Sanskrit. For example, in Sanskrit Karam (கரம்), which means hand, is of masculine gender. Daram (தாரம்), which means wife, is also masculine; while Kalathiram (களத்திரம்), which also means wife, is of neuter gender. It should be said to its credit that, viewed from its own stand-point, the Tamil language is freedom itself, when compared with the gender shackles of Sanskrit, German, French, and so on. More than one-half of the Tolkappiyam deals with Poruladhikaram, which is a branch of grammar peculiar to the

Tamil language. The Tamil Prosody, especially Venba. possesses rules which are peculiarly its own, and such rules are not to be found in the prosody of any other language. The metre found in Purananuru (புறநானூறு) is peculiar only to Tamil. Even though the word sandam is of Sanskrit origin, its connotation in Tamil is not the same as that in Sanskrit. Tamil is an independent language, and does not belong to the Aryan group of languages. Its grammar was crystallised long anterior to the Christian era. The Tamils had their own music which was very early systematised. Hence the introduction of the Sanskrit music or sandam in Tamil means not its translation or repetition, but a gradual assimilation. Therefore, in Tamil sandam, we find a preponderance of indigenous elements. Words representing measurements and weights such as ஆழாக்கு· நாழி, முந்திரி, and அரைக்காணி are purely Tamil words. According to Dr. Slater,* the characteristics of the Tamil language are its subtlety, its sense of logic, and its richness in honorifics. These and other peculiarities will go to show that Tamil is an original and independent language.

The Tamil language was no doubt influenced by its contact with Sanskrit, so far as

* Dravidian element in Indian culture pp. 31—34.

its vocabulary is concerned. The Sanskrit element in the vocabularies of the Dravidian languages is so great that it has often been urged with much show of reason by orthodox pandits that the Dravidian languages can claim no originality independent of Sanskrit, and that, in other words, Sanskrit is the mother of the South Indian languages. This is only the popular view shared by illiterate people along with the orthodox pandits, whose learning knows neither analysis nor comparison. Grammarians of the Dravidian languages have clearly pointed out that the languages they deal with are different from Sanskrit*. The fact that the Dravidian languages have borrowed Sanskrit words—or rather, to speak more correctly, that Aryan colonists have introduced Sanskrit words into the Dravidian vocabulary—can no more prove their Sankrit origin, than that English is derived from Latin and Greek, because it has borrowed largely from the classics†. Just as Sanskrit words have found a place in Tamil, so Tamil and other Dravidian words have found a place in Sanskrit. Borrowing has been common to both. It is thus clear that the Dravidian languages belong to a stock

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* The Sanskritic element in the vocabularies of the Dravidian languages.—S. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai, p. 1, Introduction.

† J. Lazarus-S. Dipika Vol. 6 p. 128.

distinct from Sanskrit. Some scholars maintain that the vedic language or Aryan primitive was in a dialectical and uncultured stage, when it was first met with on the banks of the Indus, and that the post-Sanskrit or the Aryan derivative was developed in India a long time after its introduction. The Aryans on their arrival at the north-west frontier found the Dravidians in flourishing communities. It can be asserted that the subsequent development of the uncultured vedic tongue, which resulted in Sanskrit, was owing to the influence of the highly civilized Dravidian, when the former came into contact with the latter. Prof. Rapson * bears testimony to the fact that the aboriginal languages in the south of India were associated with a high degree of culture, and hence it is not surprising to note the presence of the Dravidian element in Sanskrit. It can be easily maintained that much, that is not found in Latin and Greek but peculiar to Sanskrit alone, is due to the contact of the Aryans with the Dravidians. At the period of the Aryan invasions the Dravidian languages prevailed also in the north. This inference is derived from the change which Indo-European underwent after its introduction into India, and which can only be explained as the result of some older

* P. 50, Cambridge History of India Vol. 1.

disturbing element. The oldest form of Indo-Aryan, the language of the Rig-Veda, is distinguished from the oldest form of Iranian, the language of the Avesta, chiefly by the presence of a second series of dental letters, the so-called cerebrals. These play an increasingly important part in the development of Indo-Aryan in all its subsequent phases. These cerebral sounds now abound throughout the Sanskrit vocabulary, and yet they are foreign to Indo-European languages generally, and they are characteristic only of Dravidian. Mr. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai also maintains that the cerebral stops so characteristic of Dravidian are found in the earliest Sanskrit*. It may be concluded then that the earlier forms of speech, by which Indo-European was modified in the various stages of its progress from the North-West, were predominantly Dravidian. †

Mr. P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar holds that Sanskrit was profoundly affected, when it spread among the peoples of Ancient India, that it shed some of its vowels, Indo-Germanic a, e, o, all being levelled down to one uniform a, that it developed new consonants (*e.g.,*) the sibilants s, s', sh hopelessly confused in the pronouncia-

* Dravidic Studies No. III, p, 56.

† p. 49 Cambridge History of India Vol. 1.

tion of Sanskrit in various parts of India, and that its grammar was slowly but surely modified*. Prof. Rhys Davids maintained that Ancient High Indian, (*i.e.*,) the Vedic language, was largely subject to Dravidian influence, both in phonetics and in vocabulary. The Dravidian dialects affected profoundly the sounds, the structure, the idiom, and the vocabulary of Sanskrit. The differences between the vedic language and its hypothetic parent, Indo-Germanic, are due to the influence of the Dravidian dialects of India. In the course of its development in India on account of the constant influence of the Dravidian tongues, Sanskrit lost the subjunctive mood, many infinitive forms, and several noun-declensions, forgot its richly varied system of real verb tenses, and adopted turns of expression peculiar to the Dravidian idiom. Mr. M. Collins has shown the existence of a Dravidic substratum in the languages of North India. The Dravidian element makes its influence felt in the sounds employed not only in the Sanskritic vernaculars, but to a certain extent in Sanskrit itself. † Dr. Gundert has pointed out the not inconsiderable number of Dravidian roots adopted into Sanskrit, a fact persistently ignored

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* Vide Age of the Mantras by Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar.

† W. Elliot's *Coins of Southern India*, p. 2.

by the northern pandits. It was proved years ago by Dr. Taylor that a Tamiloid language, now represented by its most cultivated branch in the South, constituted the original staple of all the languages of India. The existence of a Tamilian substratum in all the modern dialects of India and of the profound influence, which the classical Tamil has exercised on the formation and development of both the vedic and the classical Sanskrit, is gradually coming to be recognised by students of Indian philology.* Prof. Rhys Davids in his *Buddhist India* commenting on the evolution of the Aryan languages of India maintains that the vedic Sanskrit is largely mixed up with the primitive Dravidian†. Dr. Maclean holds that there is little doubt that the Dravidian languages are comparatively older in point of time than Sanskrit.‡ We may here note the profoundly interesting theory propounded by Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar after an examination of the Punjab and Sindh antiquities. He suggests that a complete picture of the neolithic culture of India can be constructed from a study of pure Tamil words, that elementary Tamil words are

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**Origin of the word Arya*—Tamby Pillai, *Tamilian Antiquary*, Vol. II, No. 2.

† *Buddhist India*, p. 156.

‡ *The Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency* pp. 42 and 112-3.

all monosyllabic, such as can very well be represented by the pictographic script referred to by Sir John Marshall, that languages spoken in India in old times (say 20,000 years ago) were all dialects of proto-Tamil, and that the language spoken in the heart of the Lower Godavary Valley is the modern representation of Proto-Tamil. Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar believes that the so-called Sanskritic or Gaurian languages of Northern India are only the ancient dialects of Proto-Tamil profoundly affected by Sanskrit. It is evident from the foregoing account that the Dravidian-speaking races were different from the Aryas, that they were sufficiently advanced to develop languages of their own, and civilized and numerous enough to absorb completely the numerically inferior Aryan foreigners, and enrich their speech with words relating to their professions which were in a high state of perfection among themselves.

3. Dravidian Literature.

Dravidian genius was conspicuous not merely in the sphere of language, but also in that of literature. Of all the races of India, the only people, who had a poetical literature independent of Sanskrit, are the Tamils, a typical Dravidian people. * The metres and

* The Tamilian Antiquary, No. 5, p. 7.

rules of versification of Tamil poetry are different from those of Sanskrit. Tamil has preserved to this day its ancient metres of Ahaval, Venba, Kalippa, and Vanjippa. The Arya, Vaitaty, Anushtub, Gayatri, and other ordinary Sanskrit metres have not their corresponding equivalents in Tamil. The ancient Tamil versification, purely Dravidian, and its genius distinct from that of Sanskrit, and the possession of numerous, varied, and polished forms of verse independent of Sanskrit models lead one to conclude that the Tamil language had a literature of its own before its contact with Sanskrit. Without a poetic literature, metres and rules of versification are meaningless.

The grammatical treatise of Agastya (Circa 8th cent B. C.,) the pioneer of Aryan colonisation in the South, was very elaborate, and divided into three distinct departments (*viz.*,) Iyal (இயல்), Isai (இசை), Natakam (நாடகம்). At the time when the Tolkappiyam was composed, there were already in existence many grammatical treatises such as Agatthiam (அகத்தியம்), Mapuranam (மா புராணம்), Bhutapuranam (பூத புராணம்), Isainunukam (இசை நுணுக்கம்); Kalariyavirai (களரியா விரை), Kuruku (குருகு); and Narai (நாரை). Adiyarkunallar, the commentator of the Silappathikaram, who lived about the latter half of the twelfth century, says that these

works had become extinct long before his time, and that most of the works, that were their immediate successors, had also become extinct, except a few quotations from them preserved in some old commentaries that existed in his time. Tamil should have been already well cultivated, when Agastya undertook the composition of his grammar. Besides, evidences furnished by the language itself show that there was a distinctive Tamilian literature even before the time of Agastya.

The grammar, Tolkappiyam, is a masterpiece, and could have been composed only, when the language had reached its pristine maturity. References in the Tolkappiyam (Cir 4th cent B. C.) show that there existed a certain amount of literature in Tamil before its composition. For we see that most of the rules are concluded in the work by such phrases as 'they say', 'the learned thus say', 'the grammarians say so.'* The opening sutram of Cheyyuliyal in Tolkappiyam concludes with these lines :

" நல்லிசைப் புலவர் செய்யுளுறுப்பென
வல்லிதிற் கூறி வகுத்துரைத்தனரே "

These predicate the existence of numerous Tamil works furnishing Tolkappiyar with

* Vide Sutras 23, 40, 47, Vol. 1, Part 1, Tolkappiyam Porulathikaram.

materials for the several parts of his grammar.

It is undoubted that some at least of the lyrics of the Purananuru are far earlier than the so-called Third Sangam works. It is an ancient custom with the early Tamil bards in their poems to wish their kings more days of health, wealth, and happiness than the sands in the beds of the chief rivers that flowed through their capital towns, to wit :—

(1) " சிறக்க நின்னாயுள்*
மிக்குவரு மின்னீர்க் காவிரி
எக்கரிட்ட மணலினும் பலவே."

(2) " மண்ணாள் வேந்தே நின்வாழ் நாட்கள்†
தண்ணார் பொருநை மணலினும் சிறக்க."

(3) " எங்கோவாழிய, குடுமிதங்கோச்‡
செந்நீர்ப் பசும்பொன் வயிரியர்க் கீத்த
முந்நீர் விழவி னெடியோய்
நந்நீர்ப் பஃறுளி மணலினும் பலவே."

The first stanza is addressed by a contemporary poet to a Chola King. The second stanza is addressed to a Chera King by a contemporary poet of his court, while the third stanza is addressed to a Pandya King by a poet of his court. The rivers, with which the names

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* Puram 43.

† Sil XXVIII 126—28.

‡ Puram 91.

of the Chera and Chola Kings are associated in these songs, were known in the Third Sangam Age ; but the river Pahruli, with which the Pandya King is associated, has given place to the Vaigai in the Third Sangam works. It is gratuitous to assume that the Pandya poet alone should have referred to a non-existent river, while the poets of the Chera and Chola kingdoms should have alluded to their respective living rivers. The irresistible inference therefore is that the third stanza quoted above should have been composed by a poet who had lived prior to the submergence of the Pahruli river. Whatever might have been the date of this latter incident, there is no denying the fact that it should have occurred long before the Christian era. Hence we can safely conclude that this third stanza quoted above must have been composed at an epoch anterior to the Christian era. This is one more testimony to the undoubted antiquity of the Tamil literature.* That the Tamils even in these early days possessed an extensive literature will strike every one who goes through any extant old commentary of any one of the Tamil classical works. The learning and the knowledge displayed by the commentator, and the highly polished and classical fragments of quotations

* S. Dipika pp. 21-22, Vol. 14, No. 1.

and names of old standard works on grammar, theology, metaphysics, and ethics mentioned therein, all go to impress strongly upon our minds, when compared with the meagre portion that is left to us, the existence of a vast store of literature displaying considerable erudition in ancient times, which unfortunately owing to some phenomenon or other has all been lost.

A word may here be said about the three Sangams, which were, according the traditional account, bodies of learned men. The *Talaichangam* (The First Sangam) was held in Southern Madura. It consisted of 549 members including Siva, Subramanya, Agastya, and Murinjiyur Mudinakarayar. 16149 authors came to the notice of this body. The crest-gems of the First Sangam literature were Perumparipadal, Mudukuruku, Mudunarai, and Kalariyavirai. This Sangam was patronised by 89 Pandya kings. The authoritative grammar of this epoch is Agatthiyam, the grammar of Agastya. The *Idaichangam* (Second Sangam) consisted of 59 members, a few of whom were Agastyar, Tolkappiyar, Vellur Kappiyanar, and Tuvaraikoman. 3700 authors came to the notice of this academy. The authoritative grammars were Agatthiyam and Tolkappiyam. Some of the works of this period were Mapu-

ranam, Isainunukkam, Perum-Kalittogai, Kuruhu, and Vendali. 59 Pandyas patronised this Sangam. Kapatapuram was the seat of this academy which lasted for 3780 years. The *Kadaichangam* (Third Sangam) consisted of 49 members, a few of whom were Perum-kunrurkilar, Nallanduvanar, and Nakkirar. 449 authors flourished during the epoch of the Third Sangam. A few works of this age were Narrinai, Purananuru, and Kurunthokai. 49 kings patronised this academy, which sat at modern Madura, and lasted for a period of 1850 years.

The period of time ascribed to these sangams is fabulously long. The number of authors said to have flourished during the epoch of the first two sangams is grossly exaggerated and highly improbable. The literary influence of these sangams was tyrannically paramount. Any work published by anybody, to be made a part of Tamil literature, required the sanction of these sangams, 'the sovereign organs of the highest literary authority', and there was no appeal against their judgment in matters of intellectual tone and taste. Many works must have sunk into oblivion, because they were not accorded the *imprimatur* of the Sangam. Even Valluvar had much difficulty in convincing the Sangam

pandits of the merit of his Kural. These pandits doubted whether Kural could be called poetry at all, and finally applied the last test, (*viz.*) whether the Sangam's magical board could give any room for Kural. And lo! the board contracted, and gave room only for the Kural, and the 49 poets who were majestically occupying the board hirtherto were magically thrown down into the golden-lotus-tank, and with great difficulty they swam to the bank. This is the mythology of the Third Sangam. 'The muse, that was wrongfully confined by them, and was being squeezed beneath their seat, flew with all her vigour throughout the length and breadth of the Tamil world'*. The tradition concerning the sangams is another proof positive of the high antiquity of the Tamil literature.

† The literature of the Tamils is unique in the East. It is the outcome of the genius of the people themselves. It is a mirror which reflects the civilization and institutions of the ancient Dravidians. The *Tolkappiyam* itself is the most ancient composition extant in Tamil

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* A lecture delivered at the Annual meeting of the Tamilian Archaeological Society in May 1910 at Pachaiyappa's Hall—E. N. Thanikachala Mudaliar, B.A.

† *On the Study of Vernaculars* by Dr. G. U. Pope, *J. R. A. S.*, Vol. 17, p. 165.

literature, said to have been written by Tolkappiyar, otherwise known as Tiranadumagni. Among the sources which throw light upon the condition, political and social, of the Tamil people in ancient times, the *Tolkappiyam* will easily hold an important place. It is regrettable that considerable neglect should have fallen upon the great mass of early Dravidian, especially Tamil, literature. Overborne by Aryan legend, relegated to the limbo of oblivion by Indian scholars who attached greater importance to Sanskrit, the language of the Aryan settlers of India, and its merits being kept too much in the shade owing to the preference of European scholars for the study of Sanskrit, it has not had a chance of obtaining the notice it so richly deserves. To raise this book in public estimation and to show the greatness of this genuine product of the ancient Tamilakam would be a task worthy of the ripest scholar. It is no wonder that this antique work should have through the ages excited the interest and curiosity of the Tamil people. Its subject-matter is the history of the Tamil race itself, the life of the ancient Tamil country. *Tolkappiyam* would furnish a mine of classical and ethnological lore. And though it is not possible, in the light of researches that have been carried so far, to agree

with Mr. Manicka Naicker, when he says* that a critical study of the *Tolkappiyam* will enable us to discover the philosophy incorporated in the Tamil language, which embraces in full the main principles of all the six schools of Hindu philosophy, it is at least easy to maintain, with him, that much of Tamil literature and many stages of grammars should have existed before the *Tolkappiyam* to justify the existence of this perfect grammar.

Take for instance another work, the *Silappathikaram*. It is unique in the literature of the world; for we have no instance of a similar work in any other literature by a royal author who had given up the pomp and pageantry of royalty and taken holy orders, and yet composed an epic dealing with many temporal institutions, pleasures, lives, habits, and ideals of various castes and professions in commemorating the life of a virtuous woman. It would be difficult to find a similar instance in the whole range of the world's literature of a royal author dealing, from the vantage ground of impartiality, with the life and times of his brother, who was the ruler of the land, and those of his contemporaries. The moral fervour and the æsthetic perfection of the work are unsurpassed and unsurpassable.

* *The Tamil Alphabet—Its Mystic Aspect*, p. 73.

'The tragic muse was strangely foreign to the Sanskrit ear, but curiously enough Tamil genius has broken new ground in that bourgeois tragic composition, the *Silappathikaram*, which sets at defiance all known laws of the Sanskrit text-books. Here you have the poignancy of the tragic feeling and an effect identical in essence with that of the early Greek tragedies. This is a stupendous literary fact, the importance of which it will be difficult to over-estimate. Throughout the period of the old secular literature, the inspiration is purely indigenous, with just a suggestion of the Sanskrit theorist and no more'*. According to a writer in the Siddhanta Dipika, the originality of the stories in the Silappathikaram and Manimekalai cannot be gainsaid. They have a distinct *locale*, and the writers were pure Tamilians. For chasteness of expression, elevation of thought, simple beauty of imagery, extreme pathos, grandeur of conception and treatment, occasional flights of imagination, and homely and practical criticisms of men and life, these works stand unrivalled, and serve to convince the impartial critic of their worth and greatness.

The heroic poem of the Pathirrupathu

* 'Indebtedness of Tamil to Sanskrit' 24th Jan. 1925, the 'Hindu'.—K. V. Ramachndran, B.A.

(பதிற்றுப்பத்து), and the beautiful odes of the Ahananuru (அகநானூறு), Purananuru (புறநானூறு), Kalithokai (கலித்தொகை), and the Pathupattu (பத்துப்பாட்டு), help to maintain the Dravidian fame on the lyric side. The commentary of Nakkirar shows that the Dravidians did not lag behind in the descriptive side either. The Kural is another masterpiece in Tamil literature, one of the noblest and purest expressions of human thought*. The immortal author of this work, a product indubitably of the pre-Third Sangam culture, which ought to have stocked his mind, and which should be itself rich and copious, addresses himself irrespective of caste, creed, or race, of border, breed, or birth to the whole humankind, formulates sovereign morality and absolute reason, proclaims in their eternal abstractedness virtue and truth, describes the highest laws of domestic and social life, and analyses in a graceful and masterly fashion the subtlest emotions of the human heart†. The Kural owes its popularity in Tamilakam as much to the beauty of its versification as to its morality. Surely its breadth of view and its speaking to the heart of man will make it a

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* *Vide* M. Ariel's letter to Burnouf published in the Journal Asiatique, 1848.

† The Tamilian Antiquary No. 8.

favourite with the world at large. And in the possession of these qualities Valluvar resembles that other great eclectic weaver, the medieval reformer, Kabir, who spoke neither to any one particular sect, nor to any one form of religion even, but to the whole of mankind. It is therefore not surprising to find that the Kural has so sunk into the hearts of the Tamil people, and so captivated their fancy, that, though composed eighteen centuries ago, the Tamils have preserved it intact to this day. *

4. The Dravidian Music.

In the days of the First, Second, and the Third Academies, Esai Nunukkam, Indira Kalyam, Muthu Narai, Muthu Kuruku, Pancha Marapu, and Bharatha Senapathiyam were the celebrated books on music. Though these books are lost to the world, a few gems are preserved in the Silappathikaram. In this work the great poet and yogi, Ilangovadigal, has expounded for the edification and delectation of posterity the wonderful musical convention of earlier days. It occurs where the maids dance, and sing to their patron God, Kannan, to avert the effect of

* Ind. Ant. Vol. XV, p. 243 R. C. Temple's Article.

evil omens seen in the house, where the heroine Kannaki has taken refuge. Therein certain secrets of music are revealed.

Creating 12 houses in a circle, calling them by the names of the 12 signs of the zodiac, if the 7 swaras are developed as per Moorchai of music in the seven scale, we must find out a kartha ragam. The devotee maids of Kannabiran, says Ilangovadigal, made in a circle 12 places, and called them by the names of the 12 rasis. The seven maids called themselves the 7 alphabets of music. The girl Shadjama is in Tulam, Rishaba in Dhanus, the girl Ga is in Kumbha, the girl Ma is in Meena, Pa in Idabha, Dha in Kataka, and Ni in Simha. They sing. The girl Rishabha of the original basic swara changes into Shadjama, and sings. Thus the other girls change, sing, and praise Narayana. We know the starting raga is Harikamboji. The commentators of the Silappathikaram on the basis of authoritative verses of music books have defined as follows:—A raga formed out of beginning Shadjama is called Chempalai; if Rishabha becomes Shadjama, it is called Chevvalippalai; if Ma becomes Shadjama, it is called Kotippalai; and if Dha becomes Shadjama, it is called Merchempalai. This transformation is both in accord with reason and

experience. This account illustrates the Tamilian genius for music*.

5. The Evolution of Dravidian Religious Beliefs.

The ancient Dravidians reached a high stage of development not merely in the field of the fine arts, but also in the domain of religion. If there is a thing, in which a race expresses itself most completely and in its innermost qualities, that thing is its religion. Hence a sketch of the religious conceptions of the Dravidian races will be of incalculable value in estimating their greatness and their contributions to the growth and development of Indian civilization. The progress of the Tamil civilization from its primitive rude restlessness and wild aggressive valour to its ordered sense of humanity and exalted moral and religious aims of a later epoch is undoubtedly the result of the operation of diverse momentous influences, the chief ones of which have naturally been religious in origin and character. In the early stages of civilization nothing acts so powerfully as religion in stimulating and sustaining progress in human communities. The literature of the Tamils constitutes

* K. M. Ponnuswami Pillai's article on Indian Music,— Jan. 1924 The 'Hindu'

one of our important sources for a sketch of their religious history. Prof. Max Muller* in his monumental work, 'The Six Systems of Philosophy,' wrote :—'In the South of India, there exists a philosophical literature which, though it may show clear traces of Sanskrit influence, contains also original indigenous elements of great beauty and of great importance for historical purposes.' According to Dr. Pope Tamil possesses rare and original elements in ethics. Therefore a study of the Tamil literature will enable us to draw a sketch of the main lines of development of the religion of the Tamils. According to the late Prof. Seshagiri Sastriar, while the early part of the Hindu religion is based upon the Vedas, Smritis, and the Agamas, its latter part owes its origin to the customs, manners, and religions of Southern India, and is founded on the Tamil literature.

The above statements confirm us in our opinion that the religion of the South should have had an independent existence in the beginning, though subject to Aryan influences in later times. It is even possible to demonstrate that the Dravidians in certain respects remain unaffected by Aryan religious influences, and have even produced an appreci-

*' The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy—pp. XX-XXI.

able effect upon the Aryas themselves. The brahmanical systems of thought and practice founded on the Vedas have never gained universal acceptance. Their supremacy was challenged by Jainism and Buddhism even in the country watered by the Ganges and the Jumna, the region which was their own stronghold, and their appeal was everywhere made almost exclusively to the higher castes who could have formed only a microscopic minority of the population. The vast bulk of the people were either confessedly or at heart worshippers of the more primitive forms of faith*.

There was a period lost in hoary antiquity, when the indigenous Dravidian religion, with its peculiar forms of sacrifices, prophesies, and frenzied dances dimly visible still in *veriyattu*, *velan adal*, and other ceremonies of mountain races, was alone in vogue. It is said that the Dravidians were worshipping devils, and that they were tree-worshippers and serpent worshippers. Their religion is said to have consisted largely of magical superstition and demonolatry.

But, deep down in this primitive system buried beneath a mass of rites, there would have been the instinctive craving of the human heart for communion with God. This

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* *Vide Ancient India* by Rapson, pp. 34–35.

instinctive feeling after God was no doubt degraded by unworthy ideas of the spiritual world, and distorted by fear and superstition. Nevertheless, we can discern in it not merely a belief in a spirit world, but a desire to come into personal communion with spiritual beings. In the simple desire for communion with a deity of some sort there is the germ and root of true religious feeling which craves for expression. It is no wonder therefore that even in this pre-historic period there took place considerable development in the religious ideas and beliefs of the Tamil people. The warlike Tamils owing to the tropical climate became soon enervated, and attained mental calm and powers of deep thinking. They soon developed a religion suited to their ancient civilization.

Those Vedic Gods, the etymology of whose names is not patent, and who have no analogues in other Indo-Germanic dialects, must have been originally Dravidian deities. The Aryan God, Varuna, was probably the God of the Dravidian tribes, being on the borders of the sea, to whom the Aryan Rishis accorded a place in their pantheon. The Aryan Rudra is another God of the Dravidian tribes. He is essentially a mountain deity, and could be evolved by the wild mountaineers, say, of the Vindhyan regions, and not by dwellers on the plains.

His name Rudra meaning the 'Red one' seems to be a translation of the Dravidian name Siva. Korravai, the victorious matron, was the object of worship among the oldest peoples of the South, and is the great demoness whose worship is performed under many names in the devil temples of every southern village. The hill-god of the South, the son of Korravai, is Murugan, the fragrant one. The Aryan God, Tvashta, was perhaps the Dravidian God of artificers. The God of the Dravidian agricultural tribes was merged in the personality of the Vedic Indra. The Vedic God, Krishna, corresponds to the God of the Dravidian pastoral tribes. Saivism, (*i.e.*) the worship of Siva or Skanda, was prevalent among the mountain tribes long before the advent of the Aryas into the South. According to Dr. Slater, Kali, Siva, and Vishnu are Dravidian deities, though their worshfp now forms the innermost essence of Indian culture.

"Indian religion", says Sir Charles Elliot, "is commonly regarded as the offspring of an Aryan religion brought into India by invaders from the north, and modified by contact with Dravidian civilization. The materials at our disposal hardly permit us to take any other point of view; for the literature of the Vedic Aryans is

relatively ancient and full, and we have no information about the old Dravidians comparable with it. But, were our knowledge less one-sided, we might see that it would be more correct to describe the Indian religion as Dravidian religion stimulated and modified by the ideas of foreign invaders. For the greatest deities of Hinduism, such as Siva, Krishna, Rama, and Durga, and some of its most essential doctrines such as metempsychosis and divine incarnations are either totally unknown to the Veda or obscurely adumbrated in it. The chief characteristics of the native Indian religion are not the characteristics of religion in Persia, Greece, or other Aryan lands.'*

While in the pre-historic period the Dravidians worshipped a number of deities like Korravai, Muruga, Varuna, and so on, at the same time they had belief in the existence of one Supreme Being. Scholars like Dr. Pope believe that in the pre-historic period the native Dravidian religion was a kind of Saivism. Wheeler says, 'Siva was a mystic deity of Turanian origin, and was represented as half-intoxicated with drugs, and associated with ideas of death and reproduction.'

* Hinduism and Buddhism—An Historical Sketch by Sir Charles Elliot, Book I page XV.

Ragozin* holds that the worship of Siva was originally Dravidian. Fergusson in his *Tree and Serpent worship* maintains that Saivism is certainly a local, not an Aryan, form of faith, and belongs rather to the South than to the North of India. Dr. Stevenson holds that Siva was the Tamilian God, and was worshipped in two forms, one as a spiritual object of meditation, and the other as a material symbol or linga to represent the invisible to the visible eyes. Adoring God with flower and incense was an ancient practice prevalent among the Tamils. Flower represents the heart, and incense the melting of it. It is said of Ravana, a Southerner, that he was a staunch votary of linga, and carried always with him a golden linga, which he worshipped with incense and flowers. Ravana and Vali were great devotees of Siva. The Siva Linga according to Swami Vivekanandha is no phallic symbol, and according to Dr. Ananda Kumaraswamy is the least anthropomorphic of symbols. Of all the forms that are to be met with in our temples from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, the form of linga is the most universal and frequent, and is the most ancient form of worship. The linga form of worship is the one most met with in the pages

* 'Vedic India' p. 328.

of the Mahabharata. Vyasa declares, after the defeat of Ashwathama by Arjuna, that the real cause of Arjuna's superiority lay in his worshipping the linga form of Siva, whereas Ashwathama worshipped only a Personal Form of the God. Besides, the Vedas and the Upanishads frequently allude to the prevalence of this form of worship.* In various neolithic settlements in Southern India have been found several lingams. This is ample evidence, according to Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, of the fact that the worship of Siva in the form of a linga existed in the stone age, which certainly preceded the Vedic age.

Dr. V. V. Ramana Sastri † holds that there is nothing to show from the extant Tamil literature that Siva as the name of the Supreme was ever employed in it before the 7th century A. D. But there are grounds to believe that Siva was a name that the Tamils had learnt to use for the deity even in the earliest period. Agastya is said to have learnt Tamil, the language of the South, from Siva. From this it may be inferred that Siva was a Dravidian deity. ‡ Dr. Gilbert Slater

* Sivagnana Botham, p. 117—J. M. Nallasawmi Pillai.

† An article on Agamic Saivism in the Hindu, Feb. 13, 1924.

‡ 'The Dravidian Element in Indian Culture.' by Dr. Gilbert Slater *See* page 108.

says that the fact, that the RigVeda refers to phallic worship with disapproval, seems to point to the establishment of the worship of Siva among the Dravidians before the Vedic period. To the Tamil every hill-top is sacred to the gods. Siva, the lord of the Dravidians, was a Malai-Arasan (Mountain Chief) according to Dr. Oppert. Siva came to be known in later times as Dakshinamurthy, (*i.e.*) the God of the South. The Agamas, which are said to be of Tamilian origin, and which form the basis of the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, 'the choicest product of the Dravidian intellect', are said to have been proclaimed at Mahendra, one of the peaks in the Western Ghats, South of the Pothiya hills, lying between Tinnevelly and Travancore. Manickavachakar addresses God Siva as 'மந்திரமாமலை மகேந்திரவெற்பன்' (*i. e.*) the lord of the Mahendra Hill—the mountain of mystic utterance, and as 'தென் பாண்டி நாட்டான்' (*i. e.*) dweller in the Southern Pandya land. Siva is said to have been one of the members of the First Madura Academy. The original indigenous Tamil word for God is Kadavul, which means that which is beyond the reach of the mind or the final conclusion arrived at by the mind. If side by side with a belief in the existence of one Supreme Being was also found the worship of demons and

serpents, there is nothing incompatible between the two. For we know how in the present day the grossest fetishism exists side by side with the most abstruse systems of philosophy in India.

According to Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, "the original religious cult of India was a fireless one, (*i. e.*) the animals sacrificed to the Gods were not thrown in fire." 'The rise of the Vedic fire-cult could not put an end to the pre-existing fireless worship of Gods'. The Vedic references to the disputes between Aryans who were fire-worshippers and Dasyus are enough evidence of the wide prevalence of fireless cults in Ancient India*. We learn from the Vedic literature that the Aryan worship of natural phenomena and their sacrifices appeared to the Dravidian mind to be sacrilegious. The deities of the Aryans were treated with contempt, and the sacrifices were checked, whenever and wherever they were found to be performed by the Aryas.

The Tamilians at this early period might have had a philosophy of their own. Prof. A. B. Keith says that there is nothing in the Rigvedic literature to suggest that the idea of metempsychosis had presented itself to the

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* *Vide* a note on Vedic Culture in the 'Hindu' Sep. 17, 1924.

Aryan mind.* Prof. Macdonald says, 'The doctrine of Transmigration is entirely absent from the Vedas and the early Brahmanas. It seems probable that the Indian Aryas borrowed the idea in a rudimentary form from the aborigines', (*i.e.*) most probably from the Dravidians.

The first foreign influence brought to bear upon the Dravidian religion was that of the Vedic religion. What takes place, when two different cults and civilizations not wholly irreconcilable are brought face to face with each other, took place in South India, when the Northern Aryan with his vigorous and attractive religion and philosophy attempted to impose his system on the Southern Dravidian, who had an indigenous religion and philosophy of his own. The Vedic religion with its usual spirit of toleration and compromise would have adopted and modified the practices then found current in the country. The Dravidian heroes, gods, and minor deities were then identified with the Vedic deities of the Brahmans, and a fusion should have taken place between the two religions. Of course it must be borne in mind that for a long time the foreign influence upon the Dravidian religion was anything but strong ;

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* Cambridge History of India Vol. I, p. 108.

but it accumulated as time elapsed, and 'some traces of this foreign influence may be observed in such fragments of the pre-Tolkappiyam works, as now and then turn up in old commentaries.' One nation does not lose credit by exporting its superfluous products and importing other useful ones. One religion loses no merit by borrowing from another. A progressive nation cannot but absorb and assimilate foreign thoughts and foreign ideas. The infusion of fresh blood adds energy and vigour, and richness and depth. Currents of water flow with greater life and glow than stagnant pools. Therefore it is no discredit to the Tamils that they should have borrowed certain of the finer religious elements of the Indo-Aryans.

*Regarding the conception of Siva and its growth from Vedic times among the Aryan peoples, scholars tell us that Rudra was nowhere called Siva in the Rigveda, and that he merely represented the storm god, with his thunder, lightning, and the rains, rushing down from the snow-capped hills. According to Dr. Pope the original idea of Siva is found in the Vedas, but the name is simply a euphemism meaning propitious or

* *Vide* an article on 'The Svetasvatara Upanishad' by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai in the Madras Review, 1900.

gracious. The Rev. F. Goodwill[1] gives his support to this view regarding the conception of Siva. Dr. Stevenson[2] was the first to point out that Siva is not named at all in the ancient hymns of the Vedas. Although Rudra could be identified with Agni, Agni and Rudra could not be identified with Siva; for Daksha is said not to have invited Siva to his sacrifice, though all the eleven Rudras were present with him. It is said that Rudra is a terrible deity, and one of the many deities referred to in the vedic hymns. [3] 'In the post-vedic period it was sublimated into Siva as one of the Trinity. But the Tamils, who recognise Rudra as one of the Trinity, have always held by Siva as the highest. Hundreds of lines can be quoted from the Tamil scriptures in support of it. We have in the Tiruvachakam such passages as 'King of the Three' (மூவர்கோனாய் நின்ற முதல்வன்)[4], and 'Thou Source of All! Guide to the senses five; and to the Three; to me, too, in life's way!' (முழுமுதலே! ஐம்புலனுக்கும், மூவர்க்கும் என்றனக்கும், வழிமுதலே)[5].

Saivism, the native Dravidian religion of the South, fell under northern influences, and

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(1) A paper read at the Bangalore Missionary Conference Nov. 1902.

(2) See Siddhanta Dipika, Vol, IV, p. 108.

(3) V. Subbiah's note in the Hindu, Jan. 12, 1924.

(4) and (5) Pope's Tiruvachakam See pages 57, 215.

those who introduced the vedic religion into the Dravidadesa found a place in their own system for this Saivism. The vedic God of storms, Rudra, was singled out by the Dravidians as especially their God, and his words attributed to, and designations adopted for, their old God, Siva. The attributes and rites of this deity were gradually brought into conformity by a process of compromise with those of some Aryan deity or deities such as Rudra. * ' This was due to the necessity, under which the Aryan colonists of India lay, of compromising with the people among whom they settled. The Dravidian religious conceptions reacted on Aryan modes of thought. The attributes of the Dravidian deity, Siva, were found to be most in conformity with those of the Vedic God, Rudra, the wielder of the thunderbolt and father of the storm gods. The conception thus grew of a half-Dravidian, half-Aryan, deity, Rudra, who became the supreme deity, Siva, of the great mass of the Dravidians '. When the non-Aryan Gods found a place in the Aryan pantheon, the inclusion was symbolised by the Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva — Brahma standing for the ancient tradition, exclusive externalism ; Vishnu for

* Encyclopaedia of Religion and ethics—Prof. R. W. Frazer on ' The Southern Dravidians '.

the transition when the original Vedic Sun-God became humanised, and emerged from the rigid enclosure of scriptural texts into the world of the living human heart; and Siva for the period when the non-Aryans found their entrance into the social organisation of the Aryan. We know that Rudra among the Aryans slowly grew into the Siva of the Hindu Triad. It is easy to trace, how in the person of Rudra is slowly built up the conception of the various Vedic deities, Indra and Agni, Varuna and Vayu, Surya and Soma, Vishnu and Brahma, and of the Dravidian Siva. By the time the Vedas were arranged in Rig, Yajur, Saman, and Atharvan, Rudra's position as the God of Gods had become assured. By the time of the earliest Upanishads, the worship of Rudra-Siva supplanted the worship of the Vedic deities.

A word may be said about the different aspects of Siva. As the idea of Rudra was fully evolved, in Him were also centralised the various aspects of Nature as good and bad, and awful and beneficent. 'The Brahmans' according to Lord Sri Krishna, 'know two bodies of this God, one awful and one auspicious. From his being lord and great, He is called Mahesvara. Since He consumes, since He is fiery, fierce, an eater of flesh, He is called Rudra. As

He preserves the vast universe, He is called Mahadeva. Since He constantly prospers all men in all their acts seeking their welfare (Siva), He is therefore called Siva.* And in this we see Him not only as the destroyer, but as the reproducer and preserver, and as such the conception of Siva transcends the conception of Rudra as one of the Trinity. Wheeler says, 'The ancient Rudra-Siva is alternately fierce and beneficent; according to the philosophy, He is the cause of the creation and dissolution of the universe', and His early name Pasupathi is a reminiscence of the ancient practice of offering human beings like cattle in sacrifice to the fierce deity. In spite of Siva's entry amongst the Aryan Gods, his Aryan and non-Aryan aspects remained different. 'In the former, He is the lord of ascetics, who, having conquered desire, is rapt in the bliss of Nirvana, as bare of raiment as of worldly ties. In the latter He is terrible, clad in raw bleeding elephant hide, intoxicated by the hemp decoction. In the former he is the replica of the Buddha, and as such has captured many a Buddhist shrine; in the latter, He is the overlord of demons, spirits, and other dreadful beings, who haunt the places of the dead, and as such has appropriated to himself

* Vide Anusasana Parva, Mahabharata.

the worshippers of the phallus and of snakes, trees, and other totems. In the former He is worshipped in the quietude of meditation ; in the latter in frenzied orgies of self-torture.' Though this picture of the non-Aryan aspect of Siva is portrayed in somewhat exaggerated and lurid colours, and though some of the finer aspects of the Dravidian Saivism are ignored, nevertheless the fact of the existence of two aspects of Siva, Aryan and non-Aryan, receives pointed emphasis in this statement of Dr. Tagore in the *Viswa Bharati Quarterly*.

Besides Siva, other deities of the South were absorbed into the Aryan pantheon. *The worship of Skanda affords an instance of the fusion of the northern and southern religions. Skanda or Kumara is one of the sons of Siva. Being supposed to have been brought up by the six mothers, the Krittikas (Pleiades), he is known as Shanmatura and Karttikeya. The puranas state that he was born of the fiery energy of Siva in a forest of grass, and became the commander of the army of the Gods in their battle against the giant Taraka, and that he rent asunder by his arrows the mountain Krauncha. Skanda is

* South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses—H. Krishna Sastri.

known by the name of Subramanya in the Tantras. There exists a close connection between the worship of Subramanya and that of the serpent. The common name Subba or Subbaroya found among the Telugu, Canarese, and Tamil people is explained to be both a contraction of Subramanya and a synonym for serpent. The sixth day of a lunar month (Shashti) is held as peculiarly sacred to Subramanya as to the serpent-God. His riding on a peacock, his marriage with the forest maid Valliyamman, and the fact that his most famous temples are on hill tops show that he is connected with the ancient tree-and-serpent worship and the sylvan deities. In South India the worship of Skandakumara under the names Velayudha and Muruga is most popular. According to the Tamilian traditions, Muruga, the Tamil God of war, was the son of the terrible Korravai, the victorious matron. He was also regarded as the child of Kadukilal (the ancient lady = பழை யோள்). Korravai and Kadukilal were incorporated into the Aryan mythology as the Goddess Uma, and Korravai's son, Muruga, was absorbed into the Aryan system as Subramanya, the son of Uma. He is *par excellence* the God of youth, of energy, and of virility. The God has been included in Aryan theogony

from early ages. In the Tolkappiyam, Muruga is described as Seyon (சேயோன்), (*i.e.*) the son of Siva. He may therefore be regarded as the outcome of the fusion of the ancient Aryan and Dravidian cults. Thus Brahmanism in the South did not supersede any cherished national divinities, but only embodied them in a new order. For its own self-preservation, it had to admit all kinds of local deities into the Hindu pantheon. But, in spite of all that was achieved, it was quite impossible even for the Aryan genius to bring into harmony with itself, and assimilate each and every one of the practices, beliefs, and myths of innumerable non-Aryan tribes. More and more of what was non-Aryan came to be not merely tolerated, but welcomed, as the non-Aryan element became increasingly predominant in the race mixture.

We pass on to the next stage in the religious development of South India, for which the Tolkappiyam constitutes our main source of information. This work, which may be assigned to the fourth century B. C., refers to the presiding deities of the various divisions of the Tamil country such as Indra, Vishnu, Muruga, and Kali. It also refers to *Valli*, *Kodinilai*, and *Kanthali**. *Valli* stands for the moon, *Kodini-*

* **Tolkappiyam, Poruladhikaram, Sutra 88.**

lai represents the sun, while *Kanthali* signifies *Kadavul*, (*i.e.*) that power which exists without support, and which transcends all the *Tattvas*, (ஒரு பற்றுக் கோடின்றி அருவாகித் தானே நிற்குந் தத்துவங்கடந்த பொருள்). The *Tattvas*, according to the late lamented scholar, J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, form, as it were, different coats or vestures, of different textures at different times and at different stages, to the soul undergoing evolution with intent to rid itself of its coil (Anava) in strict accordance with the Law of Karma, and the Supreme Being, being devoid of these vestures, is usually addressed as 'Tattvatita,' ' beyond the Tattvas.' In fact, the very term Kadavul connotes a transcendental (Kada, கட) God, who is at the same time immanent in the universe (vul, உள்). Tolkappiyar speaks of God as formless, joyful, and omnipresent. The Dravidians had thus a clear conception of the nature of God. In the realm of philosophy the Tamils occupy a no mean place among the Indian races. The Meyppattiyal (மெய்ப்பாட்டியல்), a chapter in the Tolkappiyam, is a scientific psychology, and the Ahapporul in the Tolkappiyam is said to have an undercurrent of sublime truth, which, when interpreted, marks the different stages through which the human soul passes, ere it attains final absorption into the Supreme Being. If

this theory be true, we require no stronger proof for regarding the non-dualistic philosophy as the essential doctrine of the Tamilian religion, and the path of love as that pointed out by the Tamilian saints. Purapporul also makes a passing reference to principles of asceticism and means of salvation'.* During the age of the Tolkappiyam, the Southern Dravidians adopted a few of the social institutions, myths, and ceremonies of the Aryan settlers ; but in the opinion of the late lamented Prof. Sundaram Pillai, it was even then only an adaptation and no copy.

In the next century (*i.e.*,) the third century B. C., Buddhism was introduced into South India by Asoka. The early history of Buddhism in the Tamil country is obscure, though there are frequent references to Buddhism in early Tamil literature. It is reasonable to suppose that Asoka's Buddhist missionaries to Ceylon passed through the Tamil country, and even attempted to propagate the Buddhist creed there in spite of the statement in the Mahavamso that they flew in the air, and arrived in Ceylon. Buddhism exercised an important influence on the development of the Tamilian religion. The

* S. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai's article, p. 71, Vol. IV, The Siddhanta Dipika.

appeal to the free-will of mankind, by which each individual was summoned to take into his own hands his fate in his next existence and even to free himself altogether from the pains of existence itself, and which was addressed to every one without exception of rank, caste, or even sex, did not fail to awaken and stimulate the powers of all classes of the Tamil society. At about the same epoch as that of the introduction of Buddhism, Jainism was introduced into South India. The work of propagating the Jain faith into Peninsular India was undertaken by the disciples of Bhadrabahu, a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya. One of these disciples known as Visakhamuni came to the Pandya and the Chola kingdoms, and preached the Jaina moral code to the Tamils of these kingdoms.

6. Dravidian Architecture.

South India cannot show buildings of unquestionable antiquity. Nevertheless, South India might have possessed them in the hoary past, and their disappearance might have been due to the perishable nature of the materials used and the destructive power of a hot, damp climate and superabundant insect life. According to Dr. Slater*, the

*Dra vidian Element in Indian Culture—Dr. Slater pp. 66—6

earliest extant temples of the South show their indebtedness to a more ancient architectural art and tradition. They display the utmost elaboration of ornament. 'This must have been worked up slowly through centuries by workers in more manageable materials, so that the earliest builders of temples and palaces of stone, instead of first experimenting in simple forms and gradually adding ornament to ornament, attempted from the beginning a height of elaboration never reached elsewhere in material of the same character'. The result as in the Madura Temple is vastly impressive. There is nothing in North India, says Dr. Slater, equal to the sumptuous greatness and elaboration of the magnificent South Indian temples.

Certainly, it may be easily conceded that the remains of Dravidian architecture existing in the South at the present day are more voluminous, more extensive, more elaborate, and more impressive than those of the Aryans in the North. The magnificent Stupa of Amravati and the marvellous rock-cut temples at Mahabalipur may have been produced in later ages under Brahmanical or Buddhist influence, but they are a natural development of strictly indigenous art. According to Sir John Marshall, the Aryans were much indebted to the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India in the domain

of art. It is in the South of India, in the Amravati sculptures, that we find the richest, most rhythmical, and most imaginative designs. It is here again we find the wonderful decorative charm which pervades Indian art. India is indebted for her natural and inborn love of ornamental design to the Dravidian or pre-Aryan people. In the opinion of this celebrated archaeologist, the Indo-Aryans were destitute of natural artistry, and they did not know how to articulate their ideas with the chisel or the brush. But once their race had been blended with the Dravidian, the mixed stock, which resulted from the union, found itself possessed of the means of putting its thoughts into visible concrete form.* It must be admitted that the ancient Aryans were indebted to the Dravidians for their knowledge of architecture. Numerous hymns in the Rig Veda show that the walled cities which excited the cupidity and envy of the Aryans were mostly owned by the aboriginal Asuras ; and there is not quite as much said of lordly edifices constructed by the Aryans themselves. At a later age, Vyasa in the Mahabharata acknowledges that the great palace of Yudhishtira was built by a Danava, Maya by name,

* 'Sir George Birdwood Memorial Lecture on 'Influence of Race on Early Indian Art'—Sir John Marshall.

who had been overcome by Arjuna in battle, and an admission like this in a work apparently intended to extol the greatness of the Aryans to the skies is of considerable importance.

In this connection the remarks of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore may be found interesting. He says, 'Let no one imagine that the non-Aryan contributions had no value of their own. As a matter of fact, the old Dravidian culture was by no means to be despised, and the result of its combination with the Aryan, which formed the Hindu civilization, acquired both richness and depth under the influence of its Dravidian component. Dravidians might not be introspective or metaphysical, but they were artists, and they could sing, design, and construct. The transcendental thought of the Aryan, by its marriage with the emotional and creative art of the Dravidian, gave birth to an offspring, which was neither fully Aryan nor Dravidian, but Hindu*.

Fergusson offers very weighty observations on this much-vexed question of Dravidian architecture. The Aryan races in his opinion are not builders. They had too firm a conviction of the immortality of the soul and

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* A vision of India—Viswa Bharathi Quarterly No. 1.

consequently of the existence of a future state ever to care much for a brick or stone immortality in this world; and no material art ever satisfied the cravings of their higher intellectual powers. Fergusson adds, 'The Turanians on the contrary never rose to a distinct idea of an external God or of a future state, but supplied the place of the latter by metempsychosis and final annihilation, while their intellectual status never enabled them to create such a literature as would satisfy that hankering after immortality which is inherent in the human breast'. According to this distinguished authority, all the literature of India belongs to the Aryans, and all the buildings to the Turanians or those speaking Dravidian or cognate tongues*. Thus Dravidian architecture is of indigenous origin, and has had its own course of evolution†. Southern art‡ in the opinion of Dr. Bhandarkar is different from the northern. The conclusion is irresistible that, in spite of the absence of Dravidian architecture of anything approaching Vedic antiquity, the facts relating to it tend to point to a greater antiquity for Dravidian than for Aryan civilization.

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* Fergusson—'Tree and Serpent Worship'.

† *Vide* 'Dravidian Architecture'—Jouveau Dubreuil.

‡ 'Early History of the Deccan', p. 5—R. G. Bhandarkar.

7. Independent Evolution of Early Dravidian Culture.

The influence of the Dravidians on the culture of India has been ignored, because the literature which records the development of the Hindu religion in India was the work of a hostile priesthood, whose only object was to magnify its own pretensions, and decry everything Dravidian. But the truth is that the Dravidians had already developed a civilization of their own, long before the Aryan civilization was transplanted into their midst. The division of society among the Tamils shows that they had emerged out of savagery at a remote period, and had enjoyed an orderly, peaceful, and settled form of government for centuries. Their civilization was more ancient than that of the Aryas; for among the latter the fighting men were next in rank to the priests, whereas among the Tamils, the farmers were next to the religious men, and the military class was below that of herdsmen and artisans.

The Dravidians had been in possession of India, long before the Aryans entered it. They established mighty kingdoms in the North and South, and supplanted everywhere the uncivilized tribes with whom they came into collision, and whom they retained as slaves to till and

fight for them. They reached a high degree of civilization by their own unaided efforts and independently of the Aryans*, and in some respects as regards refinement and culture, they were more advanced than the shepherd Aryans. Dr. Slater contends, 'The Aryans then must be regarded as relatively barbaric invaders provided by their horses with an immense advantage for rapid and concerted movement and so for military and political mastery of peoples, who, as in the case of the Sumerians and Dravidians, lacked this equipment for victory and power in spite of their superiority in those elements of culture which make for wealth and civilization.' Dr. Slater concludes that we should esteem Dravidian culture above the Aryan civilization at the time of the Aryan irruption into India, since the latter was associated with war, while the former was associated with peaceful industry.† It can very well be maintained that it would be quite a mistake to look upon all the tribes that preceded the Aryans in India as far below the Aryans in culture. The Dravidians were probably the equals of the Aryans in social organisation. And the Aryans probably adopted much from them, especially in matters relating to land tenure, village

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* Hindu Law at Madras, J.R.A.S., 1881, p. 219.

† Dr. Slater—'Dravidian element in Indian Culture.'

community government, taxation, and so on.

The reason, why the Aryan irruption was so different in Southern India from what it was in the North, appears to be that, when the Aryans penetrated to the South, there existed already well-organised communities and kingdoms. The Aryans, though they communicated something of their own civilization to the Dravidians, were not able to incorporate them thoroughly into their own society and to root out their languages and peculiar civilization. On the other hand, they learned the languages of those races, and adopted a portion of their civilization†. As Kennedy says, ‡ the Aryans did much work, because they were a very mixed race. The whole history of India has consisted in the gradual and progressive blending of the dissimilar elements, the Aryan genius contributing the guiding spirit as well as the form of this mixed civilization, while the aboriginal element has contributed its contents. The Southern Dravidians were never disturbed by any extensive immigration in after times, and hence they retained their distinctive

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* Introduction to the Ambattha Sutta, p. 96, Sacred Books of the Buddhists.

† 'Early History of the Deccan', p. 5—R. G. Bhandarkar.

‡ J. R. A. S., 1913, p. 706.

characteristics. There can be no doubt that the Aryan civilization was very greatly influenced by the Dravidians*. These considerations can lead to the only conclusion that the Dravidian civilization has had an independent development of its own. With regard to the ancient civilization of the Tamil nation, there is more or less a consensus of opinion among oriental scholars including Prof. J. Vinson.

The Vedas present a picture of the social and political condition of the Dasyus, the Dravidian foes of the Aryans. There can be no question that the Dasas referred to in the Vedic hymns as the aborginal foes of the Aryas were the Dravidians. The main distinction between the Aryan and the Dasa was clearly that of colour. The Aryans hated the Dasas who did not recognise the Aryan gods. It would be impossible to exaggerate the loathing and contempt, with which the Aryas regarded those, whom they were robbing of land and liberty. 'Destroying the Dasyus, Indra protected the Aryan colour,' gratefully proclaims one poet†. The Dasas are constantly reproached for their disbelief and their failure to sacrifice. The Dasyus had a civilization not inferior to

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* 'Ancient India', p. 29—Rapson.

† Ragozin's Vedic India, p. 285.

the Aryan. They were rich in horses, cows, hundred-gated cities, jewels, castles, palaces, houses of stone, and arms. Their armour-plated chariots could resist spears and arrows. Like the Aryas, they lived in cities under kings. They raided the Arya cities, carried off their cattle, and confined them in stone prisons. Their gods like those of the Aryas lived in gold, silver, and iron castles. They knew how to form well-ordered villages, to allot lands, to make forts and buildings, and to prepare reservoirs or tanks.* Brahmanical legends refer to the strong and wealthy cities on the banks of the Indus, of which the Aryans took possession after a hard struggle; for their adversaries were well armed. Several of the places afterwards celebrated in Indian history such as Takshasila, Mathura, and Ujjain were said to have been founded by a non-Aryan people who were probably of Dravidian race†. According to Mr. Oldham, at the time of the Aryan invasion of India, the Aryans were essentially nomadic pastoralists, though possibly acquainted with agriculture. Two important epithets were applied in one passage to the Dasas. The first is mridh-ravachah, which perhaps means only hos-

* *Vide* Baden Powell's 'Village communities in India' p. 49.

† P. 19 Havell's Short History of India.

tile speech. The other epithet is anasah, which doubtless means 'noseless'. This is a clear indication that the aborigines, to whom these epithets were applied, were of the Dravidian type, as we know it at the present day*. Mr. E. B. Havell also holds that the adversaries of the Aryans in the Punjab were in all probability a Dravidian people†. Of course these Dravidians were called by the Aryans by different names such as Asuras, Daityas, Dasyus, or Nagas. We are told in the RigVeda that Indra shattered one hundred castles of Sambara, destroyed seven cities on behalf of Purukutsa, and that he boldly swept away the wealth of Sushna. Mr. Oldham maintains that Sanskrit writings ascribe to the Dravidian Asuras luxury, the use of magic, and ability to restore the dead to life. Since the Southern Dravidians were the same as those of the North, the picture of the condition of the Dravidians portrayed in the Vedic works may also be taken as true of the condition of the Dravidians of Southern India.

The earliest Dravidians were not primitive tribes, but tilled the ground and raised crops of various kinds, (*e.g.*) rice and sesamum. They were agriculturists by nature. But it is

* Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 85.

† A short History of India, p. 19.

generally supposed that the Aryans were the first to introduce agriculture into South India, and asserted by some scholars that the Ramayana is nothing but an allegorical account of the event. Nevertheless, there are grounds for believing that the art existed in South India long before the Aryans entered it. The fabulous stories relating to the dispute between Ukrama Pandyan and Indra* the controller of the clouds, and the valiant defence of them on another occasion by the race of Karkatthar† show the great efforts made by the princes and peoples in the matter of irrigating their lands for purposes of cultivation. Of course these evidences, resting as they do on tradition, can only be accepted with caution. That the Tamilians had made very great strides in the direction of agricultural enterprise in ancient times, "the only Tamil poem of the age of the Mahabharata War preserved to us in a compilation of the Madura Sangam proves beyond the shadow of a doubt'. The reference is to the complimentary and eulogistic poem addressed to the great Chera King Uthian on his return from the field of Kurukshetra by a royal poet of the times named "the crowned Naga King"

* *Oriental Historical Manuscripts* by William Taylor, p. 94.

† Mr. T. Ponnambalam Pillay's Presidential Address, Saiva Conference, Palamcotta, 1912.

of the country of Murunchi, who is believed to have flourished in the times of the First Sangam. "The poem above referred to is included in the Sangam work entitled Pura Nanuru, and sings the praises of a Chera monarch who supplied rations of rice to both the contending armies in the Mahabharata War for all the eighteen days of the fight*."

The chronology of the first two Sangams has not been once for all settled, and even their existence has been regarded by some as purely a figment of the diseased imagination, and the reference to the existence of a Tamil poet of the days of the Mahabharata is regarded as unhistorical and too fanciful to be believed. It is now coming to be more and more recognised that the traditions of a people can never be rejected *in toto* by any scholar worth the name. The idea is happily gaining ground that it is no longer correct to declare that the person, who seeks information from ancient tradition, should first prove that it is worthy of attention ; for now the duty rather lies on the person, who pronounces a tradition to be worthless, to give reasons for his assertion. we shall content ourselves with simply remark-

* *Tamilian Antiquities*—V. J. Tamby Pillai, *The Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. 5, p. 170.

ing that, if we can rely on the authenticity and genuineness of this poem, no more evidence would seem to be necessary to establish the fact that, even so early as the age of the Mahabharata, the cultivation of paddy was carried on, on a gigantic scale, on this side of the Vindhya mountains.

The names of Marutham, மருதம், the land where paddy and other grains are cultivated with the aid of irrigation, and of paddy, நெல், are Dravidian terms*. The term paddy was not known to the Aryans at the time of their first appearance. Sir John Hewitt in his treatise on *The Pre-historic Ruling Races* says that the Dravidians were of all the great races of antiquity the first to systematise agriculture. Archaeology also confirms the evidence obtained from tradition, literature, and language as regards the acquaintance of the ancient Tamils with agriculture. The labours of Alexander Rea, M. J. Walhouse, Captain Newbold, Colonel Branfill, Burgess, Caldwell, R. B. Foote, R. Sewell, and other distinguished archaeologists have made us familiar with the existence of monuments such as rude stone circles, cromlechs, dolmens, menhirs, Kistvaens, urns, Tumuli, and Pandukulies at Adichanallur,

* Ponnambalam Pillai's address *Ibid.*

Perumbair, Coimbatore, Pallavaram, Palmanir, Kollur near Tirukovilur, and many other places in South India. It is affirmed that the people, who used these burial urns, must have been an agricultural race, as brass and iron implements of agriculture were often found buried in their graves.*

The Dravidians had made much progress in the industrial arts. They worked in metals. The Dravidian name for a smith, karuma, from which the vedic Karmara is probably borrowed, meant a smelter. Their artificers made ornaments of gold, pearls, and of precious stones for their kings. The explorations of the Hyderabad Archaeological Society have brought to light pottery with incised marks resembling those of Minoan Crete. The Adichanallur remains, we have already indicated, consisted of bronze figures of a variety of domestic animals and of fillets of gold beaten very thin. These afford conclusive proof of the artistic development of the Dravidian races in pre-historic times. Such were the economic and industrial glories of the Dravidian races. Before closing, we may note the very profoundly interesting observations of Dr. Slater. In his opinion the Dravidians had a separate priestly caste.

* *The Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. 5, p. 169.

The Dravidian magicians became the ancestors of the Brahmans. If the caste system, Dr. Slater argues, was evolved under Aryan influence, it is singular that it should have attained its fullest growth and greatest influence in Southern India, which was least exposed to Aryan contact, and especially in that western corner of Southern India cut off from all foreign influences save those coming from the sea. According to this distinguished Professor, the caste system was Dravidian in origin, though doubtless affected in its development by the Aryan invasion. Further investigations will have to be carried on before Dr. Gilbert Slater's remarks will receive unqualified and universal support. There is in the west a growing appreciation of the ideals of non-Aryan civilizations. We are sure that within a few years the culture of Dravidian India will be valued in the west, and her achievements in philosophy, literature, and art will take their right place in the scheme of human culture and civilization.

8. Dravidian Astronomy.

Dr. Maclean* observes, 'The fishermen of the South, dependent on the moon's phases for their operations early developed a primitive

* 'Manual of Administration of the Madras Presidency.'

lunar computation of time. The agriculturists of the plains observed the seasons and the movements of the sun. The Tamils had a highly developed practical astronomy, before they were touched by Brahmanical influences, and their system still holds its ground in many respects. The Jovian cycle of five revolutions of Jupiter or sixty years, which regulates the chronology of the Tamilians, is no part of the Aryan system. The familiar period of twelve years for domestic events among the Tamils is similarly independent." The Tamil calendars according to Dr. Slater are very suggestive. The civil calendar of the Tamils is solar, and does not even concern itself to make a month consist of so many days. The ecliptic is divided into twelve divisions, and at whatever moment in the morning, noon, or night, the sun enters a new division, at that moment the new month begins. Days begin at the calculated moment of sunrise at the spot on the equator 'which is also on the meridian of the site of the ancient Tamil observatory.' 'This unique calendar aims at a degree of astronomical accuracy and consistency beyond that of any other calendar in use.' These remarks prove the independent origin of Dravidian astronomical science in South India, and hence should be borne in mind by scholars,

when they contend that everything connected with astrology, astronomy, and time-measure in Tamil is from Sanskrit.

9. Dravidian Commerce.

In the field of commerce, the activity of the ancient Dravidians has been equally striking. South India, the home of the Ancient Dravidians, was the heart and centre of the old world for ages. It was one of the foremost maritime countries, and was the mistress of the eastern seas. It is here possible to give only a few rude outlines of South Indian commerce in general. The subject is too large, too intricate, and too difficult to be dealt with to allow here of a detailed and circumstantial description.

The Dravidians of South India were accustomed to the sea. They formed a large proportion of the sailors of the Indian Ocean. It is believed that regular maritime intercourse existed between South India and Western Asia even before the 8th century B. C. Various proofs have been adduced to establish the high antiquity of the maritime intercourse of South India with West Asia. The Dravidian speaking races of India traded with the Ancient Chaldeans, before the Vedic language found its way into India. Indian teak was

found in the ruins of Ur, and it must have reached there from India in the fourth millennium B. C., when it was the seaport of Babylon and the capital of the Sumerian kings. "This particular tree grows in Southern India where it advances close to the Malabar coast and nowhere else; there is none to the north of the Vindhya."* This shows how advanced and enterprising were the Dravidians even as early as 4,000 years ago.

The Story of Joseph, who came to Egypt abut 1700 B.C., is a notable evidence of the early caravan trade which, crossing Arabia, carried the merchandise of India to Egypt, Syria, and Babylonia. In the tombs, dating from the time of the 18th Dynasty of the Egyptian rulers which ended in 1462 B. C., were found mummies wrapped in Indian muslins. The Egyptians of those times, says Prof. Lassen, dyed cloth with indigo, and this vegetable product could have been obtained only from India at a time when the major portion of it was still non-Aryan*. But Thompson, after examining with the aid of a microscope some fragments of mummy clothes preserved in the British Museum, came to the conclusion that they were all linen, and not cotton. As to the indigo, Sir George Wilkin-

* *Vide* Ragozin's *Vedic India*, p. 305.

son says that the broad-coloured borders of these clothes are similar to patterns which occur in paintings of the 16th and 18th Dynasties, and he does not explicitly state that indigo was used during the time of the 18th Dynasty.

The Egyptians employed in their naval expeditions the Phoenicians. Hiram, King of Tyre, and the Hebrew king, David, father of Solomon, combined in joint commercial expeditions to Ophir. The Ophir expedition started once in three years. The ships of Tarshish left Elath on the Bay of Elath or Ailah, proceeded to Berenike on the Egyptian coast, and thence to Okelis at the mouth of the Arabian Gulf. From this harbour, or from Kane on the Erythraean Sea, the ships sailed to the mouth of the Indus or to Barygaza, (Broach in the Gulf of Cambay), or to Muziris, or some other southern port. 'The navy of Tarshish brought gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks from India.' Solomon (962—930 B. C.) is said to have got sandalwood, apes, and peacocks from Ophir *via* ports on the Persian Gulf. The peacocks, which are mentioned to have been brought from India, are called in the Bible Tukkiyam, a plural form of Tukki, in which word scholars have recognised the Tamil word 'Togei', as can be seen

* G. Oppert—*On the Ancient Commerce of India.*

in old Hebrew dictionaries. The Dravidian name of peacock in the Bible intimates the presence of Dravidian traders. Ophir is identified with the Abeira of Ptolemy, the district bordering on the mouths of the Indus. These statements are not met with universal acceptance. Ophir, it is said, is not an Indian port, but a place in Arabia. It is said that it was not sandalwood, but something else taken for sandalwood, that was received by Solomon. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the period of Solomon was one of great commercial activity. It is possible that the trade, which glorified his age, was carried on with some briskness by his neighbours with India for some centuries past.

As regards Indian trade with Assyria, it may be noted that gold, tin, silks, pearls, spices, and other valuable kinds of merchandise had been flowing from India into Assyria, since the foundation of the first Assyrian Empire in the 14th century B. C. The early Greek bards such as Homer were acquainted with tin and other articles of Indian merchandise. That gold was largely exported from India in very early days has been inferred from a number of corroborative facts. M. M. Perrot and Chipiez inferred, from objects found in the excavations, from inscriptions in which the

Assyrians boast of their wealth and prodigality, and from Egyptian texts in which the details of tribute paid by the Syrians and Mesopotamians are given, that Nineveh possessed a vast quantity of gold, which she obtained from her commerce with mineral-producing countries such as India. In an old Babylonian list of clothes occurs the word Sindhu, and all scholars are agreed that this meant Indian cloth. This cloth did not reach Babylonia through Persia by land ; for, in that case, the original 's' would have become 'h' in Persian mouths. The tribes, among whom the Vedic Mantras were composed, knew of the sea and sea-voyages by report, and not at first hand, and therefore this export trade was carried on by the Dravidian-speaking races alone*. That there existed sea-borne commerce between South India and West Asia prior to the 8th century B. C. cannot now be denied ; nevertheless, in the opinion of some scholars, some more evidence is required to establish it beyond the possibility of a doubt.

But for the period subsequent to the 8th century B. C., the available evidence becomes fuller, and so it is possible to make an authoritative statement. †The receipt of Indian ele-

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* *Vide* Ragozin's *Vedic India*, p. 307.

† *Vide* Kennedy's article, J. R. A. S. 1898.

phants as presents by Shalmaneser IV of Assyria (727—722 B. C.), the discovery of a beam of Indian cedar at Birs Nimrud in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar III (604-562 B. C.), the reference in the * Baveru-Jataka to the adventures of certain Indian merchants who took the first peacock by sea to Babylon, the importation into Babylon of the Indian rice and the Indian sandalwood, and the acquaintance in Babylon of the Hebrew compilers of I Kings and II Chronicles with the Tamil names of these exports, these bear eloquent testimony to the existence of sea-borne commerce between India and West Asia in the 8th, 7th, and 6th centuries prior to the Christian era. This trade was chiefly in the hands of the Dravidians who had a colony in Babylon.† Baudhayana's condemnation of the Northern Aryans who took part in this trade with West Asia proves that they were not the chief agents in it, although they had a not inconsiderable share.

Kautilya, the reputed author of the *Arthasastra* or 'Manual of Politics', was of opinion that the commerce with the South was of greater importance than that with the North,

* No. 339, Jataka iii, the Cambridge Edition.

† *Vide* Kennedy's Article on *The Early Commerce of Babylon with India*—J. R. A. S., 1898.

because the more precious commodities came from the peninsula, while the northern regions supplied only blankets, skins, and horses. Gold, diamonds, pearls, and conch shells are specified as the products of the South. Madura was famous for her textile fabrics. From the *Tolkappiyam** we learn that the Tamils used to cross oceans for the purpose of acquiring wealth. Taking advantage of the constant intercourse between South India and the countries in West Asia and East Europe, one of the Pandya rulers of Madura in 20 B.C. sent an embassy to the Emperor Augustus, and another sent for Grecian soldiers, and employed them as his bodyguard.

The fact that the Dravidians carried on the Indian trade with West Asia is strengthened by other evidences. The Dravidian name for ships, *oda*, is an original word, and not borrowed from Sanskrit. The Sanskrit name of pearl (mukta) is from the Tamil *muttu*, its name in the land where it was dived for. The Greek name for rice, *oryza*, was borrowed straight from the Tamil *arisi*, and not through its Sanskritised form vrihi, and the Greek peperi is the Dravidian *pippali*, long pepper. If the Greeks received rice and pepper from India, and if these names are

* Porulathikaram Vol. I, part 1, Sutra 34.

Dravidian words, we obtain an additional proof of the non-Aryan element represented in the Indian trade.*

From the *Mahavamsa*, *Rajavali*, and the *Rajarathnakari*, we learn that from very early times there were relations established between the Singhalese kings and the Chola and Pandya rulers. In the 6th cntury B. C., a Pandya princess married Vijaya, the 'Lion born,' and the founder of an illustrious dynasty of princes in Ceylon†. From some unnamed port in the southernmost section of the eastern coast, near Tuticorin, ships sailed to the opposite coast of Ceylon. By this route Vijaya's Pandyan bride and her retinue were conveyed to their new home; his ambassadors having already come by it from Ceylon to the Pandyan coast. The descriptions of the various voyages in the legends connected with the life and times of the Buddha imply that the vessels were ships of large size, and carried a large number of passengers. For instance the ship in which Vijaya's Pandyan bride was taken over to Ceylon, consisted of elephants, horses, and waggons worthy of a king, 18 officers of state, craftsmen and a thousand families of the 18 guilds‡, 75 menial

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* Oppert.—*On the Ancient Commerce of India*, p. 37.

† Radhakumud Mookerjee's *Indian Shipping*, p. 70.

‡ P. 59, Geiger's *Mahavamsa*.

servants, slaves, and the princess and 700 virgins who accompanied her. The vessels employed were sailing ships. The crews were well-organised. The seamen had considerable nautical skill*. In the same epoch, we hear of the existence of matrimonial relations between the people of the Pandya kingdom and those of Ceylon. About 205 B. C., a chief known as Elala sailed with an army from the Chola country to Ceylon, and conquered it†. Usurper and stranger though he was, even the priestly Buddhist chronicles bear witness to the eminent qualities of this Tamilian who ruled the kingdom for well-nigh forty-four years administering justice with impartiality to friends and foes. People from the Chola and Pandya kingdoms sailed to Manthottam opposite Danushkodi, and plundered Ceylon. Some Tamils established settlements, and raised magnificent temples in the island. These relations, established with Ceylon, incontestably prove that the Tamils were a great sea-faring people in those ancient times.

From several centuries before the Christian era, a double stream of traders and adventurers began to flow into Indo-China from

* *The Deccan in the time of Gautama Buddha* by Thomas Foulkes, *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. 16, pp. 49-57 and pp. 1-8.

† P. 353, *Ceylon* by J. E. Tennent.

Southern India, through Burma and its southern coasts, by sea, and founded there settlements and commercial stations. Besides, there is no doubt of the antiquity of South Indian commerce with China. It is well-known that there existed communication by land and sea between the furthest east of China and the utmost south of India. From a study of *Manimekalai*, it may be inferred that the Tamils, even before the Christian era, traded with the islands of Sumatra, Java, and Malaya*.

The existence in the Tamil language of pure Tamil words like *kadal*, *paravai*, *punari*, *arkali*, and *munnir*, all of which refer to the sea, and of words like *kalam*, *marakalam*, *mithavai*, and *kappal*, which are also original Tamil words, and which all denote a ship, proves that the Tamils in the earliest times were a sea-faring people†.

During the early centuries of the Christian era, there was an extensive trade between South India and Rome. Roman subjects lived at Muziris and other towns. Muziris was one of the famous emporiums on the western coast of Tamilakam, much frequented by Yavana merchants. From the Peutingerian Tables (225

* *Sen Tamil*, Vol. 5, p. 419.

† *Sen Tamil*, Vol. 13, p. 156.

A. D.), we learn that the Romans had in this city a force of about 2000 men to protect their trade, and a temple erected in honour of Augustus. There was a Grecian colony of Byzantium on the Malabar coast. * It is now well known that in the early centuries of the Christian era there was a large influx of foreign merchants, and that a considerable quantity of Roman *aurei* and *dinarii* must have been imported into India for purposes of merchandise, and indeed we read of gifts in *dinarii* for the maintenance of lamps in temples. Small coins were also locally minted by a colony or colonies of foreigners. The importance of Roman commerce was so great that the local money should to a large extent have been replaced by the Roman. There have been discovered in the South of India numerous hoards of Roman coins at Kottayam near Tellicherry, Kaliyanputtur in the Madura District, Pollachi, Karuvur, and Vellalur in the Coimbatore district, Pudukottai, and at other places. These facts incontestably prove that the commerce of South India with Rome could not have been inconsiderable. Indian goods went to Rome through Alexandria. Later on, Byzantium also participated in the receipt of Indian goods.

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* *Tamilian Antiquary*, No. 1 Vol. II, p. 41.

Pearl fishery was an important national industry in South India. * It was chiefly as the country from which pearls came that the Greeks knew Southern India. Pearls came from the coasts of the Pandya kingdom, and Megasthenes had heard of Pandaea, the daughter of Heracles (Krishna), who had become Queen of a great kingdom in the South. With her he also connected the pearl. Heracles wandered over the world for ridding land and sea of the monsters that infested them, and had found this thing of beauty in the sea made, it might seem, for a woman's adornment. Wherefore from all the sea pearls were brought together to the Indian coast for his daughter to wear. The pearl in India according to Arrian was worth thrice its weight in refined gold†. There was brisk trade between South India and Rome in pearls. Roman ladies were very fond of these pearls. They adorned nearly every part of their body with them, even down to the straps of their sandals, making their presence known by the clinking of pearl-strings. Lolla the wife of the emperor Caius Claudius, appeared often publicly covered with pearls worth £ 300,000 sterling. The story about the wager between Queen Cleopa-

* *The Cambridge History of India*, p. 423, Vol. 1.

† *Ind. Ant.* 1876, p. 89—The INDICA of Arrian.

tra of Egypt and the Triumvir, Antonius, is well-known. She possessed two large pearls used as pendants of the ear which had previously been the property of other Eastern sovereigns, and were valued highly. She dissolved one pearl worth £ 80,000 in strong vinegar, drank it, and was only prevented by an attendant of Antonius from dissolving the other pearl. The exports of South India to the western Roman Empire were crystals, onyx, sardonyx, hyacinths, amethysts, corundum, smaragds, carbuncles, beryls, sapphires, chrysolites, and opals. The Roman Senator, Nonius, was proscribed by Antonius for the sake of an opal which was in his possession. Nonius escaped leaving all his treasures behind, but took away with him his opal ring valued at £ 8,000 sterling. Pliny is indignant that two millions sterling of Roman money were annually swallowed by India.

Foreign visitors obtained pepper, cassia, and sandalwood from the Malabar coast. The coins of Yagna-Sri, the ruler of the Andhras, bear unmistakable testimony to the existence of sea-borne trade on the Coromandel Coast in the second century of the Christian era.* Along the Coromandel Coast, from Nellore as far south as Cuddalore and Pondicherry, a

* Radhakumud Mookerji's *Indian Shipping* p. 50.

class of thin copper die-struck coins occurs. They are found in considerable numbers in or near dunes and sand-knolls in the vicinity of the *kuppams* or fishing hamlets that stud the shore, together with Roman oboli, perforated Chinese coins, bits of lead and other metal, and beads. These are collected by the wives and children of the fishermen after gales of wind or heavy rains, and purchased from them by the itinerant pedlars, called Labis and Markayars, in exchange for useful necessaries, by whom they are sold to braziers and coppersmiths. The discovery of articles of this description in such localities indicates the existence of a considerable maritime trade in former times, probably during the first four or five centuries of the Christian era. The copper die-struck coins might have belonged to the period when the Kurumbars, a pastoral tribe, were ruling on the Coromandel Coast for some hundred years before the seventh century A.D. They are stated to have been engaged in trade, and to have owned ships, and carried on a considerable commerce by sea. On the reverse of these coins, there is a figure of a two-masted ship like the modern coasting vessel or *dhoni*, steered by means of oars from the stern.* It

* *Vide* Elliot's *Coins of Southern India* pp. 35–37, Radhakumud Mookerji's *Indian Shipping* pp. 50–52, and *Catalogue of Indian Coins* by Rapson p. LXXXII.

can safely be asserted therefore that these coins bear witness to a great maritime traffic in the early centuries of the Christian era.

The earliest Tamil works that we have refer to sea-trade in the beginning of the Christian era as an ordinary occupation of the Tamil people. From *Manimekalai* we learn that in Java a king by name Aputhran was ruling at Nagapuri, and that the heroine Manimekalai sailed across to the island, and paid a visit to him. The oldest Tamil proverbs have their own tale to tell regarding the ancient civilization and history of the Tamils. "Though Elalasingan's goods go across the seven seas, they will return safely." A proverb like this affords abundant tesimony to the maritime and commercial activity of the time of Elalasingan, a contemporary of the immortal author of the *Kural*. Another ancient proverb current among the Tamils is known as 'திரைகடலோடியும் திரவியம் தேடு'. This indicates the character of the people among whom it sprang up. World-history teaches us that traders frequently become rulers. The more we study the materials available on the subject, and the more we reflect on them, the more we realize that the Dravidians were a great people, whom trade pushed into the thrones of many a strange land. But some how they have forgot-

ten the glory that once was theirs. And verily the proverb, which once was theirs, is now nothing more than a proverb to them. It has lost its ancient meaning and significance for the modern descendants of the once glorious Dravidians. The debt, which the world owes to the Dravidians for its culture, will be fully known only when their true history is studied without bias and preconceived notions of any kind.

The two chief ports of Tamilakam were Muziris or Cranganore (Muyirikkodu), the great port of the Chera kingdom, and Bakarai or Vaikkarai, the haven of Kottayam, now in the Travancore State. Korkai, the Greek Kolkhoi, on the Tamraparni river was the principal seat of the pearl trade. Puhar, where a colony of Yavana merchants had settled* at the mouth of the Kaveri, was a rich and prosperous emporium of trade on the eastern coast. These merchants had a separate quarter of their own, and were in possession of rare and precious articles for sale. The grandeur of this great emporium of South India (*i.e.*) Puhar is very vividly brought home to our minds by Kadiyalur Rudirangannanar in his work *pattinappalai* composed in praise of Karikala Chola, who, according to the best

* *Tamilian Antiquary*, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 45.

authorities, was flourishing in the first century of the Christian era. The poet says in the course of his description of this ancient Chola city, "Adjoining the fishermen's quarters is the well-guarded broad street containing the store-houses of merchants. In the front-yards of these stores are heaped bales and parcels, which have been imported, and which have to be exported. These consignments are imprinted with marks of tiger by the customs-officers for the purpose of levying customs due to the State. These officers are as vigilant in their duty as the horses of the sun. Rams and dogs go skipping about on the heaps of bales and parcels." Other streets in the wealthy quarters are then taken up. There are the abodes of the Moors, the Chinese, and others who have come down from distant lands, and settled here amidst the natives........The merchants always conduct their sales stating expressly their net profit........Flags indicating gay taverns, flags posted in places, where paddy, betel and nut, and sweets are sold, flags lifted up on the ships anchored in the harbour, these and others are so many, that the city is beautifully shaded, and the sun can find no way to let in his scorching rays. In this emporium are found the produce of the Kaveri and the Ganges, victuals from Ceylon and Kadaram, corals from

the eastern ocean, pearls from the southern ocean, sandal and scents from the western mountains, gems and gold from the Himalayas, and horses and pepper brought in by ships*. Karaikal, Manmelkudi, Aludayarpattinam, Ammalpattinam, Kottaipattinam, Devipattinam, Tutukudi, Kayalpattinam, Kulasekarapattinam, Tondi, all these might have been the other great sea-port towns in the early centuries of the Christian era. The Tamil poets tell us of the vases and lamps of the Yavanas and of the European soldiers who wore fine armour, and defended the city of Madura with courage. *Purananuru*, an ancient Tamil classical work of the early centuries of the Christian era, speaks with admiration of the great and beautiful ships of the Yavanas which frequented the port of Muziris†. The ancient Tamils used to have light-houses (கலங்கரை விளக்கம்) to warn ships, ‡ besides customs-houses, warehouses, godowns, docks and piers, $and one such light-house is described at the great port of Puhar (Kaveripumpattinam) at the mouth of the Kaveri, a big tower or a big palmyra

* *The Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. IV, p. 19—article of Mr. T. Chelvakesavaraya Mudaliar, M.A.

† Prof. Dubreuil's Article, *India and the Romans*, Ind. Ant. Vol. LII, pp. 51-52.

‡ *Sen Tamil*, Vol. 13, p. 159.

$ Pandit Olaganatha Pillai's *Cholan Karikalan The First*, p. 44.

trunk carrying on the top of it a huge oil-lamp. Tradition, as recorded in Tamil literature, indicates that from very remote times wealthy cities existed in the south, and that many of the refinements and luxuries of life were in common use. The singular good fortune of Tamilakam in possessing such coveted commodities as gold, pearls, conch shells, pepper, beryls, and choice cotton goods attracted foreign traders from the earliest ages. Commerce supplied the wealth required for life on civilized lines. As regards the influence of foreign nations upon the history of the ancient Dravidians, it is said that the Dravidians, who visited Babylon during their commercial intercourse, perhaps brought with them a knowledge of coinage, of the solar-signs and week-days, * and some aspects of Babylonian architecture. The influence of Babylonian architecture is seen in the miniature huts erected along the exterior edge of each stage in the 'raths' at Mahabalipuram. The Dravidians like the Accadians of Babylon venerated mountains, and expressed their veneration in a unique and striking form. If the elementary conceptions of art and architecture were indigenous, there was scope for the borrowing of detail. One is

* *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. XIII No. 2, p. 617.

struck with the striking resemblance between the pyramids of Egypt and the famous pagodas of Tanjore and Madura. The kernel of the story of the Deluge, according to Ragozin, was imported by the Dravidians from Babylon in pre-Aryan times.* That the Dravidians in their turn should have exercised a considerable influence upon foreign nations goes without saying. But this subject, regarding the debt which South India owes to the nations of West Asia and the influences, cultural and religious, she in turn exercised upon those nations, deserves a more thorough research and investigation, before anything like a definite verdict can be said upon it.

To conclude, it has been indubitably shown that South India had considerable commercial intercourse with the different nations of antiquity. The enrichment of civilization consequent upon the constant and lively interchange of ideas and experiences with the myriad races of the ancient world, the high degree of material prosperity that followed in virtue of this extraordinary commercial enterprise, and the remarkable outburst of literary and intellectual activity, witnessed during the Augustan Age of Tamil literature, which, we venture to believe, is the outcome of that

* Ragozin's *Vedic India*, p. 344.

prosperity, these along with a distinct non-Aryan alphabet, a highly cultivated language exclusively Dravidian, a polished literature composed on Dravidian lines and independent of Sanskrit models, an indigenous system of religion, and an advanced civilization independent of Aryan influences are a few among the momentous factors that entitle the ancient Dravidians to a high place among the nations of antiquity.

CHAPTER III

ANCIENT SOUTH INDIAN POLITY.

The subject of Ancient South Indian Polity is one that has not hitherto been worked out in all its multifarious aspects. Only a rough outline of the evolution of political institutions may now be attempted reserving for a subsequent monograph a more detailed investigation. It is a theme that bristles with difficulties innumerable owing to insufficient data and uncertain chronology. Every assertion is liable to be contradicted, and every statement is open to serious objection at the hands of critics and scholars. The period taken up for investigation covers a very vast period consisting of many different stages, each one of which may require a volume by itself, and will require the labours of many different savants and antiquarians. It is therefore with considerable diffidence that the present attempt is made to sketch in brief the development of political institutions in Peninsular India from the tribal stage of society to the fully organised national kingdoms, checked and controlled by popular institutions, of the early centuries of the Christian era.

The subject of Ancient South Indian polity, here taken up for study, embraces three distinct periods known as the pre-historic period (from the earliest times up to 1000 B.C.), the semi-historic period (1000-100 B.C.), and the historic period (100 B.C.—400 A. D.). I call the first period as pre-historic, because the account for that period is largely traditional, and can hardly be shown to be conclusively and authoritatively true in the present state of our knowledge of this period. The second period we have labelled semi-historic, because a few genuine facts may be inferred from the material at our disposal, and this period may be brought within the pale of authentic history by patient and laborious research in the future. As for the third period, commonly known as the Augustan Period in Tamil literature, otherwise called the epoch of the Third Sangam, its historicity has gained the almost unanimous assent of scholars.

At the outset, the first point to be discussed in connection with the resuscitation of the lost South Indian polity is the sources of our knowledge for the period under review. For the first period, the sources, which throw light upon the institutions, social and political, of South India, are the hymns of the Rigveda, where we have numerous references to the

Dravidians in general. The sources for the second period are the observations made by writers like Hewitt on the probable primitive institutions of the Dravidian races from a study of survivals and the *Tolkappiyam*. The two great Indo-Aryan epics, the vestiges of Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian. and Roman civilizations which illuminate the early intercourse of South India with Western Asia, the Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon, the observations of Megasthenes, Asoka's Rock Edicts, and the *Halasya Mahatmya*, these, which shed a very feeble light on the political history proper of South India during this period, are not at all, it is regrettable to note, helpful in the laborious task of reconstructing bit by bit the early polity of South India. For the third period, we have the reputed works of the Third Sangam like the *Kural*, *Ahananuru*, *Purananuru*, *Silappathikaram*, *Manimekalai*, *Kalithokai*, and the *Ten Idylls*, all of which are now acknowledged by the generality of scholars to have belonged to the early centuries of the Christian era.

The age, when the Tolkappiyam was composed, has not as yet been definitely determined by scholars. It is curious that wide differences of opinion should exist on this vital question. Nachchinarkiniyar, the celebrated commentator of the Tolkappiyam, holds that it

was composed, before even Vedavyasa, who lived probably between 1500 and 1000 B.C., arranged the Vedas into Rig, Yajur, Saman, and Atharvana*. This view is also shared by Pandit A. Mootootambi Pillai,† who however considers the 5th Millennium B. C., as the probable age of this ancient grammar. Pandit R. S. Vedachalam in his work entitled *Ancient Tamilian and Aryan* regards 1250 B. C. as the probable date of the Tolkappiyam, and he believes that it might be given even a higher antiquity, and placed about 2400 B. C. Such extravagant theories as these need not require refutation.

It is maintained by pandits of a certain type, that every part of the *Tolkappiyam* is independent of Sanskrit, and devoid of any trace of Sanskrit influence. This view seems to be untenable for this reason that the *Tolkappiyam* throws light upon various subjects, such as caste and forms of marriage in vogue among the Aryas. Tolkappiyar in his chapter on *Kalaviyal* seeks a reconciliation between the Aryan forms of love and wedding and the Tamil forms of marriage. The *Tolkappiyam*‡ undoubtedly shows a medley of the Dravidian and Aryan

* *Vide* Pandit Savariroyan's Article, p. 42 S. Dipika Vol. III.

† *Vide* History of Tenmoli.

‡ Dravidic Studies No III, p, 11—Mr. S. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai, M. A.

institutions. It shows distinct traces of the influence of the Aryan immigrants. It should therefore have been composed at a time when the Aryan Brahmans had already come to South India, and had even introduced their ceremonies and institutions. It can definitely be shown that the colonisation of the South by the northern Aryans should have commenced about the 10th century B. C. Hence the more probable and correct view of the matter would be to regard the *Tolkappiyam* as a post-colonisation work.

In his monograph on *The Aindra School of Sanskrit Grammarians*, Dr. Burnell assigns the eigth century A. D. as the probable date of Tolkappiyar*. This strange view is quite in keeping with the spirit of European scholars, who are not prepared to concede any high antiquity to the Dravidian civilization or culture. The *Tolkappiyam*, according to tradition, is a work of the Second Madura Academy. Scholars are now almost agreed, that the Third Madura Academy flourished during the early centuries of the Christian era. Therefore, the *Tolkappiyam*, a Second Sangam work, should have been composed before the commencement of the Christian era. The late lamented Kanaka-

* Dr. Burnell—*On the Aindra Grammar*, p. 8.

sabhai Pillai lends his weighty support to the view that it is a work of the first or second century B. C. Mr. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai, the distinguished Tamil scholar, seems also to favour the view that it cannot be assigned to any period later than the first century B. C.

Panambaranar, a contemporary of Tolkappiyar, in his preface to the *Tolkappiyam* says that Tolkappiyar mastered the Sanskrit grammar of Indra, and that the *Tolkappiyam* was recited at the Court of Nilantharuthiruvirpandyan, and approved by Athankottasan. It is well-known that Panini's great Sanskrit grammar made an epoch in Indian literature; his name occurs everywhere, his treatise soon superseded all others, and has exercised the ingenuity of a countless number of followers. Certainly, for two thousand years and more, Panini's word has been law in Aryan India on all questions of grammar. It is evident that, for it to have gained such a position of preeminence in so conservative a country as India, it must have been infinitely superior in the eyes of the Brahmans to all the numerous treatises which were undoubtedly in existence before Panini's time. And therefore it is a surprise to some scholars to find Tolkappiyar, a Brahman of Brahmans, the son of Jamadagni and the pupil of Agastya, studying and follow-

ing Indra's work in his grammar of the Tamil language. It is therefore argued that Panini was not known to the Southerners of Tolkappiyar's time. Besides, one of the sixty-four predecessors quoted by Panini in the field of grammatical science was Indra, and Indra should therefore have flourished before Panini. Thus Tolkappiyar must have lived anterior to Panini. We shall now examine these views categorically. Scholars are divided in their opinion of Panini's date. While Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar assigns to him the 7th century B.C., Prof. A. B. Keith considers that Panini should have flourished about 300 B.C. * It is maintained by some that Indra's date † might be placed about 350 B. C. As regards the date of Indra, we can only remark that, assuming Indra to have been a historical personage and not a dim and shadowy mythical figure, and assuming him to be other than the modern Indra or Jainendra who lived sometime perhaps in the 5th century A. D., the date, 350 B. C., assigned to him may not be acceptable for this reason that even in the Vedic works Aindra grammatical terms are found. It is therefore beyond the possibility of a doubt that these words are much older

* The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 113.

† *Studies in South Indian Jainism*, p. 39.

than Panini. And yet we are forced to regard Indra and Panini as almost contemporaries, if the dates assigned by certain scholars be regarded as absolutely correct and above controversy.

But a more important point deserves consideration. In the opinion of Dr. Burnell, by the Aindra Grammar one must understand a school of grammar and not a specific work by an individual.* If the passages, in which the Aindra Grammar is mentioned, be examined closely, it will be seen that they really bear this meaning, and do not attribute an actual grammatical treatise to the God Indra. Indra was fabled to have originated the science of grammar, but the Indra (or Aindra) Grammar was the primitive grammatical science as handed down by various teachers. Therefore we are justified in assuming that two schools of grammar, those of Indra and Panini, might have existed side by side, and that Tolkappiyar preferred the Indra system to that of Panini. Therefore to argue that Tolkappiyar was anterior to Panini, on the ground that he followed Indra's treatise and not Panini's, may not be entirely sound. Besides, the naturalness and simplicity of Aindram might have

* Dr. Burnell's *The Aindra School of Sanskrit Grammarians*, p. 31.

appealed to Tolkappiyar more than the artificial and involved arrangement of Panini, just as the syle of composition of Aindra's Grammar was the one adopted in the *Katantra* and Katyayana's *Varttikas*, and several others which are presumably of a later age. Dr. Burnell himself admits that the Aindra treatises belong to a system older than Panini's, though there is pehaps reason to believe that not one of them is, as a whole, older than the grammar of the last.

In the opinion of certain Tamil scholars, it is even open to question whether Aindram, on the principles of which the *Tolkappiyam* is said to have been modelled, was a foreign element or an indigenous treatise on grammar.* Lastly it may be noted that Tolkappiyar nowhere tells us on what model he composed his grammar, and Panambaranar's prefatory note to the *Tolkappiyam* may after all turn out to be a later interpolation ; but it may be stated with equal justification that there is nothing to throw doubt on Panambaranar's colophon which could have been made for no possible reason, if untrue. Thus the famous colophon of Panambaranar, of which much capital was and is being made by Tamil scholars, is shown to be altogether valueless for

* The *Tamilian Antiquary*, No. 5, p. 9.

the purpose of determining the age of the Tolkappiyam, and the outcome of our long and wearisome discussion seems to be to make the existing confusion worse confounded.

A new theory regarding the age of the Tolkappiyam has been put forward by one Mr. V. V. R.* in reviewing the *Studies in South Indian Jainism.*† Mr. V. V. R. would have us believe that, in the opinion of Panambaranar, the author of the Tolkappiyam was a Jain. He is also of opinion that the third century B. C., the date assigned to Tolkappiyar, is a great deal out of focus. Mr. V. V. R. says, 'It is incorrect to say that there is a reference to Indra's Sanskrit grammar in the colophon to the Tolkappiyam........It must be clear to every impartial student, from a perusal of what appeared in the Sen Tamil (Vol. XVIII, p. 339), that in the opinion of Panambaranar....the Tolkappiyam drew largely on Indra's grammar. To identify the grammar to which Panambaranar refers, a ready help is available in the Silappathikaram (XI, ll, 98—99 and 154—155). Kaunti retorts on the Brahman, "Don't you know from the kalpa the

* Presumably Dr. V, V. Ramana Sastri, the distinguished Agamic Scholar. The review appears in The 'Hindu' April 4, 1925.

†M. S. Ramasamy Iyengar M.A., of the Vizianagram College.

true nature of the work revealed by Indra ?." She refers to the *kalpasutra* of Bhadrabahu, which was reduced to writing in Western India some time about 500 A.D. The tradition of the Digambara Jains, to whom the *kalpasutra* belongs, and one of whom, Vajranandi, started a 'Dravida Sanga' in Madura about 440 A.D., is that Indra put some questions to Jina, with the result that the whole science of grammar came as answers. This tradition is voiced for instance in Samayasundarisuri's commentary on the Kalpasutra. The grammar goes by both the names of 'Aindram' and 'Jainendram' by reason of the two channels through which it passed in the course of its genesis. The last redactor of the Aindram was Pujyapada, otherwise known as Devanandi, and when it is known that the founder of the 'Dravida Sanga' in Madura, Vajranandi, was none other than a pupil of Pujyapada, it can be readily inferred that Vajranandi should have been the means of giving currency to his master's redaction of the 'Aindram' in the Dravida Sanga of Madura. Prof. Pathak assigns the Aindram, that is to say, the date of Pujyapada to the latter half of the 5th century A. D. Now, if the 'Aindram' was woven into the Tolkappiyam so as to make of it such a magnificent textile as it is, it could only be the work of a Jain belonging to the

Dravida Sanga, and the date of it could not be earlier than a century after the founding of the Dravida Sanga. The date of the Tolkappiyam works therefore to the end of the sixth century A. D.' Mr V. V. R. then refers to the word 'orai' found in the Tolkappiyam. This word 'orai' is said to be derived from the sanskrit 'hora', which in turn was another form of the Greek 'hore'. 'The great astronomer, Varahamihira, fixed once and for all the Greek terms and teachings in an orthodox setting through his authoritative works in Sanskrit. The date of varahamihira is important as a landmark for fixing the time, when the Greek astrological 'termini technici' became current coin in Sanskrit astrology. Varahamihira died in 587 A. D.' In Mr V. V. R's opinion, it is idle to deny that the word 'orai' was taken into Tamil from Sanskrit. He goes on to say, 'Considering the difficulties of transmission in those days and the time that should be allowed for the reputation of an author of Upper India to be fully established in the Southern districts, we shall not be far wrong in taking the first half of the 7th century A. D. as about the earliest date for Varahamihira to be recognised as an astrological classic in the Tamil districts, at any rate among those who could read Sanskrit, and took an interest in astrology.'

Mr. V. V. R. concludes that the date of the Tolkappiyam may safely be put down round about 650 A. D. Incidentally he seems to support the view of a microscopic section among orientalists that the Augustan Age of Tamil Literature should cluster round the 8th and 9th centuries of the Christian era.

In the interests of truth, it must be stated here and now that Mr. V. V. R's theory is a bundle of fallacies and inaccuracies. We shall now examine the position of this scholar. He asserts that Tolkappiar is a Jain. Tolkappiyar, the student of Agastya and son of Jamadagni, has not informed us, when and why he became a Jain. We hold that there is no reference to Jain or Buddhist doctrines in the Tolkappiyam. Mr. K. S. Srinivasa Pillai, a distinguished Tamil scholar, believes that Tolkappiyar did not belong to the Jain persuasion. Besides, an overwhelming majority of Tamil scholars maintain that the theory of Tolkappiyar being a Jain rests on insufficient data. Panambaranar's reference to Tolkappiyar as *Padimaiyon* (படிமையோன்), on which the theory that Tolkappiyar was a votary of the Jain cult has been ingeniously built up, need not necessarily indicate that Tolkappiyar was a Jain. The term Padimaiyon might be applied to people of other persuasions as well. The next point

in the extracts that calls for attention is the learned reviewer's discovery of a reference to *Kalpasutra* of Bhadrabahu in the Silappathikaram (XI, II 98—99, 154—155).

The verses referred to are the following :—

(1) புண்ணியசரவணம் பொருந்துவி ராயின்
விண்ணவர் கோமான் விழுநூ லெய்துவிர்

(Silappathikaram XI, II, 98-99).

(2) கப்பத்திந்திரன் காட்டிய நூலின்
மெய்ப்பாட்டியற்கை விளங்கக்காணு

(Silappathikaram, XI, II, 154-155).

Line 99 alludes to Indra's Grammar, while line 154 contains a reference to the grammar written by Indra, whose age is made up of many yugas. The first word கப்பம் (Kappam) in line 154 means simply a collection of yugas, and signifies a long time. The Tamil word Karpam (கற்பம்) corresponds to the Sankrit word Kalpam (கல்பம்), while its prakrit form is Kappam (கப்பம்). Thus the first word in the line simply refers to the age of Indra, and cannot under any circumstances refer to the *Kalpasutra* of Bhadrabahu. We do not know on what authority this view of Mr. V. V. R. is based. At any rate, so far as we are able to comprehend, there is no warrant for the assertion that there is in this passage an allusion to Bhadrabahu's work. If our view of the matter be correct, then the whole theory

of Mr. V. V. R., that the Tolkappiyam was composed centuries after the dawn of the Christian era, falls to the ground. If Mr. V. V. R's theory that the golden era of Tamil letters clusters round the 8th and 9th centuries is to be accepted, then it means that the theory built up so laboriously by a host of competent scholars like the Madras University Professor, Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar, and the distinguished author of 'the Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago,' Mr. Kanakasabhai Pillai will become exploded, and the reconstruction of South Indian history will have to be made on different lines, and our ideas of the beginnings of South Indian history will have to be thoroughly revised and modified. On the whole, the elaborate reasoning exhibited by the learned reviewer in his treatment of this question seems clearly to rest upon a very uncertain and slender basis.

There can be no two opinions with regard to the antiquity of the *Tolkappiyam*. Tolkappiyar treats of Prosody as a minor section of the Porul division, whereas, by the Third Sangam age, prosody has become so important as to be co-ordinated with the threefold orthodox parts of grammar. A new classification had therefore to be adopted, and separate treatises were written on prosody alone such as the *Kakkai-*

padiniyam. The fact that fewer Sanskrit words are to be found in the *Tolkappiyam* than even in the so-called Third Sangam works is another circumstance which testifies to its great antiquity.

In Tennent's History of Ceylon the third erosion is stated to have occurred in 306 B. C. during the time of Devanampiya Tissa. Taking this last deluge as the one referred to in the *Iraiyanar Ahapporul,* some fix the third century B. C. as the lower limit of the *Tolkappiyam.* In their opinion, the testimony of the *Rajavali* and the *Maharamsa* bears witness to the same view. Besides 'Tolkappiyar's mention in his work of Hora, for a knowledge of which it seems we are indebted to the Greek astronomers that accompanied Alexander the Great in the course of his Indian raid, would fix the age of Tolkappiyar as the third century B. C.'*

There are other evidences in the Tolkappiyam itself which may enable us to assign to it even an earlier age than the third century B. C. It will be seen from the Sutras 24, 27, and 28 of Vol. I, part I of the Tolkappiyam Porulathikaram that at the time of Tolkappiyar there were in use some Tamil words, in the middle of which letter combinations like lya (ல்ய), jnya (ஞ்ய), nya (ங்ய), mya (ம்ய), vya (வ்ய), and mva

* *Studies in South Indian Jainism,* p. 39.

(ம்வ) could occur. Not a single word of the kind referred to here is to be found in the whole range of the existing Tamil literature. In the Kural, a work of the first century A. D., it is not found. The period, when such words were current, might have been at least three centuries before the age of the Kural.

One comes across a host of words inbedded in the poems of the third Sangam which would be guilty of a serious violation of the rules laid down by Tolkappiyar. To cite a few illustrations :—

" சகரக்கிளவியும் அவற் றோரற்றே
அ, ஐ, ஔவெனும் மூன்றலங்கடையே"

(Sutra 29).

"ஆ, எ, ஒ, வெனும் மூவுயிர்ஞகாரத்துரிய"

(Sutra 31).

"ஆவோடல்லது யகரமுதலாது"

(Sutra 32).

If these rules of grammar had been made about the time of the early Third Sangam writings, they should have been strictly observed in them. But words like Chamaithu (சமைத்து), Chambu (சம்பு), *Chathukkam* (சதுக்கம்), *Chanthi* (சந்தி) *Chalam* (சலம்), *Upam* (யூபம்), *Ukam* (யூகம்), *Yavanar* (யவனர்), *changu* (சங்கு), and *chamam* (சமம்) found in common use in the writings of the Third Sangam constitute a gross breach of the above rules.

If Tolkappiyar had flourished during of the age of the Third Sangam works, he could not have made rules to outcast these words enshrined in them. ' As he should have deduced his principles from the standard literary works held in honour in his time, he should have made provision for the same in harmony with the tendencies of his time, and not traversed the sanction of the great masters of literature. He could not therefore have lived anywhere near the Third Sangam period, and much less after it.' The Tolkappiyam should have been composed at a time long anterior to the Third Sangam epoch. 'For, words are not smuggled into a language in the teeth of its grammar in a single season and in wagon loads. These proscribed words should have crept in by stealth, and must have lingered long in the shade, before they could freely and openly mingle with their innocent fellows; and it should have taken them longer still to muster into a colony sufficiently strong to extort for themselves a general amnesty, and to attract the notice of literary authorities to revise their systems of laws in order to make room for them'. The irresistible inference therefore is that some centuries might have elapsed between the age of Tolkappiyar and that of the poets of the Third Academy. The third century B. C. was

the epoch marked by the introduction of Buddhism and Jainism into South India. There is no reference to the doctrines of Buddhism or Jainism in the whole of the Tolkappiyam. The learned author of the *History of Tamil*, Mr. K. S. Srinivasa Pillai, concurs in this view. On all these grounds, we shall not be far from the truth, if we conclude that the age of the *Tolkappiyam* may not be assigned to a later period than the fourth century B. C.

Though the *Tolkappiyam* is now shown to have been a work possibly of the 4th century B. C., it is believed by some Tamil scholars like Mr. Senathi Raja that it gives us a glimpse into the political and social condition of Southern India in pre-Aryan times, (ie) in those early times anterior to the advent of the Aryas into the South. It has already been stated that the date of the commencement of the Aryan colonisation of the South is probably the tenth century B. C. Since, in the opinion of these writers, certain portions of the *Tolkappiyam* refer to a period, when Aryan influence was conspicuous by its absence in the south, the *Tolkappiyam* is conceived to picture for us the condition of South India, as it was before 1000 B. C.*

* The Tamilian Antiquary No. 5, p. 20.

SINGULAR FEATURE of TOLKAPPIYAM

What are the reasons for this bold and confident assertion? The *Tolkappiyam* contains three books, each comprising nine chapters. The first book deals with Orthography. The second book deals with Etymology. The third book called *Porulathikaram* is the grammar of matter. This is a special feature of Tamil unknown in any other language. *Porul* falls into two divisions *Ahapporul* and *Purapporul*. *Ahapporul* or conjugal love relates to domestic affairs, and Purapporul relates to State affairs. Thus the third book deals with love and war, which in a primitive society were the only themes capable of arousing the enthusiasm of the poet or the strains of a bard. But why should Tolkappiyar include in a purely grammatical treatise the subject of *Porul* which does not fall within the scope of grammar in general? It is because in their opinion *Porul* is of Dravidian origin. Before the *Agatthiam* and the *Tolkappiyam*, there existed a Tamil literature on *Porul*. Tolkappiyar, who found the customs of the Tamils different from those of the Aryans, wanted to leave accounts of them to posterity. So these writers conclude that the *Tolkappiyam* contains vestiges of the Dravidian society in pre-Aryan times, and that it therefore constitutes an important source for our knowledge of the social and

political organisation of the Dravidians prior to the 10th century B. C. But this view seems to be far-fetched, and betrays an utter want of the historic sense. Tolkappiyar nowhere states that he is portraying the condition of the Dravidian society, as it was six hundred years before his own time, if our determination of his age be accepted at least as approximating to the truth.

Regarding the pre-historic period, it has already been shown how from the Vedic literature we could learn something about the political organisation of the Dravidian society. It has already been pointed out how the Southern Dravidians should have had chiefs who lived in fortresses, and who could fight with bows and arrows, and how they had attained a respectable level of civilization of their own. Beyond these few references, our knowledge, as regards the political organisation of the Dravidian society in the prehistoric period, is sadly defective.

Then passing on to the semi-historic period, we shall first of all study the probable village organisation of the Dravidian society. The whole mass of villages, as far as they are ancient in South India, are of non-Aryan origin*, since no considerable bodies of Aryans ever set-

* Baden-Powell's, *Village Communities in India*, p. 54.

tled at all in these regions. The non-Aryan races had established villages for agricultural life before the Aryans. But the Dravidians of Southern India have been slowly changed in the course of ages by climatic conditions and by their absorption of some of the Aryan religious beliefs, practices, and customs. Consequently we do not expect to find their village and other customs actually primitive, but only showing some marks of their origin. There are places in Chutia Nagpur, Orissa, and elsewhere, where some Dravidian tribes have retained their original customs. The remarks of J. F. Hewitt and Baden-Powell who had exceptional opportunities of studying all about the remnants of the Dravidian races at those places enable us to infer as to what might have been the probable condition of the Dravidian society in the semi-historic period.

The Dravidians of South India were organised in tribes. The country traversed by the forest races of South India was, as the number of occupants increased, divided among a number of communities, to each of which a fixed area of territory was assigned by local custom. The boundaries of these were carefully defined, and each tribe pursued its avocations within its own limits. The different settlements were separated by large} expanses of forest and

waste, within which they chose new camping grounds, when the soil round their original residences was exhausted. The men employed their time chiefly in hunting animals for food, while the women searched for vegetable food such as fruits, roots, and edible grass seeds. Among these women agriculture first originated in India. They secured yearly crops by sowing the seeds of the wild rice and coarse local millets. It was, when this custom of sowing seeds had been established, that the first attempt to change the encampment into a permanent village was undertaken. Huts were made of a few tree boughs stuck in the ground, and each settlement was only occupied, as long as the fertility of the soil lasted. They were usually placed on the higher slopes of hills. It was the forest races of South India that first founded the village communities and provincial governments. The villages were originally the rude settlements of the nomad agriculturists of the forest races. The villages were in the first instance established by distributing or allotting the territory among the smaller groups, each led by its petty chief or chiefs who in turn allotted the land within the village for the holdings of the various families or persons entitled to be provided for. As time went on, new villages were constantly established one by one by small

groups starting out on their own account into the abundant waste and clearing a new settlement independently of the movement of a whole clan or sept.

The unit of the Dravidian society was thus the village. In the ancient Dravidian village there was developed a compact tribal organization under a more or less centralised government. There was a hierarchy of village officers who looked after the equable distribution of land. 'There is an elaborate establishment of lots or holdings for the headman, the priest, the deputy or accountant, and a staff of artisans or menials. The village sacred tree or grove, the village deity, and the village dance or festival symbolise the unity of the village settlement; while a group of villages or tribal territorial divisions unites to form a larger territorial unit comprising from 10 to 100 villages—a confederacy meeting in assemblies to confer on any important matter that concerns several of the villages in common.' There are evidences of the regular institutions of Dravidian autonomous villages, unions of villages, and territorial divisions*

Vide Radha Kamal Mookerjee's article on *Indian Village Assemblies* in the Lucknow University Journal, Vol. 1, No. 3, and J. F. Hewitt's *History and Chronology of the Mythmaking Age.*

In taking up for study the *Tolkappiyam*, our next important source, we leave behind us the region of hypothesis and conjecture for comparative certainty, and shall proceed to sketch in outline the structure of the Dravidian or Tamil society, as gleaned from this great Tamil classic. There were five different communities scattered in different parts of the country and living apart by clans, each having its own tutelary deities and chiefs following its own customs and manner of living, such as *Marutamakkal* or agricultural tribes, *Kurunchimakkal* or semi-agricultural tribes, *Mullaimakkal* or pastoral tribes, *Neithalmakkal* or fishing tribes, and *Palaimakkal* or hunting tribes. Among the agricultural tribes the towns were called Ur, Perur (big village), and Mudur (old village). The chief of an agricultural tribe in ancient times was called Uran (lord of the village) or Kilavan (elder, owner). The semi-agricultural tribes living in hilly districts were known as Kuravar. Their chief was known as Verpan or Chiḷampan. Their towns were modest clusters of huts called sirukudi (little huts). The pastoral tribes inhabited jungle tracts of land. They lived in villages called cheri (சேரி) and padi (பாடி). The men were called Ayar and Idaiyar. Their tribal drum was called pambai. The

fishing tribes lived in villages called pattanam or pakkam. Their chiefs were known as Cherpan or Pulamban, Turaivan, and Konkan, and the ordinary men were called Parathar and Nulaiyar. The tribes inhabiting desert tracts were known as Vedar. These were the nomads. They lived on hunting and plundering the adjoining countries. Their chiefs were Kalai and Vidalai. Their habitations were called Kurumbu, and their war drum was Tudi. The people were also called Maravar and Eyinar. * The pastoral tribes worshipped Vishnu; the hill tribes worshipped the god Muruga; the fishing tribes worshipped the god Varuna; the agricultural tribes worshipped the god Indra, while the nomads worshipped the goddess Kali.

It is surprising to note that these five different tribes enumerated above have continued to exist side by side for centuries, some of them even to the present day, with their characteristic habits and manners. We would not be far wrong, if we imagine that these tribes might have existed unchanged even long before the *Tolkappiyam*. At any rate it is quite possible to infer that these existed long before Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, and Canarese separated from the parent stock, and

* *Tolkappiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 5, Part 1, Vol. 1.

became differentiated into different dialects; because among the Canarese and Telugus, the same tribes, with almost the same names and occupations as those among the Tamils, may be found to exist even now.

Thus, there were five territorial divisions, such as hill (*Kurunchi*), plain (*Marutham*), the region between hill and plain (*Mullai*), sea-shore (*Neithal*), and waterless waste (*Palai*). Besides, the *Tolkappiyam* refers to four professional castes such as *Arasar* (Kshatriyas or Rulers), *Anthanar* or Parpar (Brahmans), Vanikar (Merchants), and Vellalar (Agriculturists). The duties of the four classes are thus described:† Learning, teaching, sacrificing, officiating at sacrifices, giving alms, and receiving alms, these belong to the Brahmans. Learning, sacrificing, giving alms, protecting the people, crushing the wicked, these are the functions of the king. Learning, sacrificing, giving alms, cultivation, trade, and tending cattle, these belong to the class of merchants. The Vellalas are divided into two classes, the higher and the lower. The duties of the higher type of Vellalas are learning, sacrificing, giving alms, cultivating lands, trade, and

* *Ethnographical Survey of Mysore*—Mr. Nanjundayya M.A., M.L.,

† *Tolkappiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 75.

tending cattle, while those of the lower type of Vellalas are learning (excepting the vedas), giving alms, cultivating lands, tending cattle, trade, and services to others. Only certain duties were special to each class. Thus the special duties of a Brahman were to officiate at sacrifices and receive gifts; those of the king to protect the people and punish the wicked; those of the merchants and the higher Vellalas cultivation, trade, and the breeding of cattle; and those of the lower Vellalas services to others, trade, agriculture, and the breeding of cattle. The higher Vellalas and the merchant class had at first the same duties to perform, even though in actual practice each class specialised in one walk of life. The merchant class attended to commercial matters. The attention of the higher Vellalas was absorbed by high matters of state. They could enter into vocations allotted to the upper three classes. Nachchinarkiniar states that Vellalas could give their girls in marriage to those of the kingly class, serve in the army as commanders, and could become kings of the second class, and be called '*Arasu*' and '*Vel*' (*Kurunilamannar*).* The Vellalas occupied a high position during the days of Tolkappiyar. In the words of

* *Sen Tamil*, Vol. 11, No. II, p. 366.

Tiruvalluvar, the author of the *Kural*, they constituted the noble heritage of a nation.

The Aryan theory, that mankind is divided into four varnas or groups of caste, such as Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra, was wholly foreign to the Southern Dravidians. Caste was non-existent. There is no reference to the term 'sudra' in the whole of the *Tolkappiyam*. In the words of Mr. Manicka Naicker a transmutable, plastic, and barrierless professional distinction is all that is found in the work. The *Tolkappiyam's* fourth class can never be identified with the degraded North Indian fourth class Sudra of any age. A caste system nearest to this can only be found in Dutt's Rig Vedic castes. Manu's compound castes cannot be gleaned the least in the *Tolkappiyam*.

True love among the ancient Tamils had two phases known as *Kalavu* or furtive love and *Karpu* or wedded love. Furtive love answers to what is known as courting among Europeans, the only difference being that courting may perhaps end in rejection which may be mutual or one-sided, whereas furtive love is real love between the champion and the dame unknown to the world at large. The discovery may bring about the wedding,

or, if frustrated, bring about the voluntary death of both the parties, as their love was chaste and dignified. The form of marriage that was in vogue among the Tamils corresponded to the Aryan Gandharva form of marriage. * 'It is the oldest and the best appreciated form of marriage among the ancient Tamils, as also the most natural way of effecting a life-long union, in which romance, free choice, karmic activities, and religion, all mingle together in one harmonius whole. Mutual choice in a god-sent and casual meeting leads to private consortship, which sooner or later ends in the happy union of the parties with the consent of their parents.' The marriageable age of a boy was sixteen, and that of a girl was twelve. Polygamy and prostitution were prevalent among the ancient Tamils. Slavery † was not unknown. Women did not accompany their husbands to the battle-field,‡ nor would they accompany their husbands, if the latter went abroad for the acquisition of knowledge or riches. Women would not be allowed to accompany their husbands, whenever the latter undertook sea-voyages. § Men,

* *Christian College Magazine*, Quarterly Series, Vol. III, No. 2 p. 95.—Mr. R. Rangachariar's article.

† *Tolkappiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 23.

‡ *Tolkapiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 175.

§ *Tolkapiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 34.

who had to go abroad for the acquisition of knowledge, would not be away from their homes for more than three years. The people knew how to sculpture * in stone. The references to the *virakkal* put up in honour of the departed heroes illustrate this point. If the people knew how to sculpture in stone, it may be presumed that they could have built palaces and temples and fortresses in stone. Unfortunately, these have all perished leaving not a trace behind.

So far, our sources of knowledge, if imperfect, have given us some material to sketch the main outlines, however indistinct and shadowy, of the Dravidian society. Unhappily, when we turn to consider more closely the details of the political organisation proper, the evidence becomes painfully inadequate and disappointingly meagre. From the section on Purapporul in the *Tolkappiyam* we learn that the different tribes or clans were under the patriarchal rule of their chiefs who had fortified places and armies. The arms of the soldiers consisted of bows, arrows, swords, and javelins. The chiefs marched to battle to the sound of the tribal drums and flutes, and the standard-bearers carried the flags or banners of the respective tribes, each of whom had a

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* *Tolkappiyam*, Porulathikaram, Sutra 60.

distinct banner. The soldiers had long hair, which they tied into a knot on their heads, and the warriors wore different kinds of flowers on their *Kondai*, when going to or returning victorious from the field of battle, and they wore anklets on their ankles which made a jingling sound when they marched to battle.

Cattle-lifting was the beginning of warfare between two Tamil chiefs. The section dealing with cattle-lifting contains a graphic account of this practice. In a series of animated stanzas, the plan, progress, and results of the raid are vividly described under the title of *vetchiturai* from the badge of *vetchi*, a plant worn by the leader and his men. The large numbers of *virakkal* that lie scattered profusely in different parts of the country testify to the prevalence of a practice like that of the cattle fighting so common on the borders between Scotland and England in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries. * Elliot says: "As the exclusive constitution of an Indian village tends to isolate it from the cultivation of friendly relations with its neighbours, it seems probable that the bolder spirits of one township might occasionally take advantage of a favourable opportunity to pounce upon the cattle of another

* *Ind. Ant.* May 1897—W. Elliot's article.

especially among the communities which constitute the predatory classes." The examples of such cattle raids are not confined to adjoining villages, but are quite common to frontier villages of opposing States. Then open war breaks out leading to the systematic invasions of the raiders' territories. Then follows the siege. The war ends in victory for one of the parties. Sober counsel is given to the victor about the transitoriness of mundane enjoyments, when he becomes intoxicated with his own triumph in the war. It is also given to the defeated chieftain to suppress his grievance, to make him remain calm and resigned without being overpowered by grief, and direct his thoughts about the life to come.

It should be borne in mind that the methods of warfare above sketched should have been in vogue not only among petty chiefs, but also among the rulers of the Pandya, Chera, and Chola kingdoms. Tolkappiyar nowhere explicitly refers to the existence of these three well-known Tamil kingdoms. From this it is argued by certain scholars that the description in the *Tolkappiyam* carries us back to remote times, to the beginnings of the Dravidian society, to a semi-agricultural and nomadic state, when the chief wealth of a tribe consisted of cattle, and when organised king-

͜ms had not been formed. To us this view seems to be untenable. For want of a better source of information, grammatical works like the *Tolkappiyam* have to be laid under contribution by those intent upon the elucidation of the forgotten history of ancient South India. Tolkappiyar need not have made explicit references to the Tamil kingdoms notwithstanding their existence as well-organised kingdoms in his own age, since he was bringing out a purely grammatical treatise of the Tamil language and not a monograph on the political history of the Tamil country.

The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, Asoka's Rock Edicts, Sinhalese traditions, the *Periplus*, Ptolemy's *Geography*, Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa*, all these eloquently testify to the prevalence of flourishing, vigorous, and independent monarchies in the Tamil country. If the traditions and the different lists of the Pandyan dynasty and the *Halasya Mahatmya* of the *Skandapurana* which gives an account of the sports or miracles of Sundaresvara were investigated without prejudice, the truth will certainly dawn upon any eager inquirer that the Pandyan dynasty should have originated at an epoch even anterior to the fifth century B. C. In making this state-

ment we are not indulging in any vague generalisation, and we are confident that one day this statement will meet with universal assent. *The ancient history of the Chola kingdom commences at the same time as that of the Pandyan. It can be safely asserted that the Chera kingdom, which is always enumerated along with the Pandya and the Chola States by original authorities, had as high an antiquity as the Pandya and the Chola.

We shall now proceed to describe the genesis of the monarchy in South India. We have before referred to the existence of five different tribes with their elders or chiefs. These chiefs by the conquest of neighbouring territory and the absorption of adjacent tribes would have developed in course of time into great rulers of organised kingdoms. We may note that, when nomad communities settle down to agriculture, the old men of these communities would become the acknowledged heads, and begin to exercise at first a patriarchal authority over them. With the increase of the family, this power augments, and they become chieftains. The first of the Pandyans seems to have been one of those patriarchs of an agricultural community who, by conquering some of the adjoining tribes, had become a sovereign.

* Wilson's *Catalogue of the Mackenize Mss.* p. 49.

This was probably also the process, by which the other kingdoms such as the Chola and the Chera might have come into being.

It is possible to notice but a few stray references to the polity of these kingdoms. Kapatapuram,* the capital of the Pandyas, was golden, beautiful, adorned with pearls, and worthy of the Pandyas. The Pandyas were crowned by Agastya, the priest of the Pandyas. † It may be inferred from the *Indica* of Megasthenes that the Pandya Queen had 500 elephants, a force of cavalry 4000 strong, and another of infantry consisting of about 130,000 men. ‡ Owing to the moral influence of Asoka, the monarchs of the Chola, Pandya, Satyaputra, and Keralaputra kingdoms made arrangements in their respective kingdoms for the caring of the sick, both of men and cattle. Besides, they caused wells to be dug, and trees and useful healing herbs to be planted on the roads for the benefit of men and cattle. Though the credit for this beneficent measure is attributed to Asoka in his Girnar Edict, it is only reasonable to suppose that the above mentioned arrangements could not have been introduced by Asoka's will into

* *Tamilian Antiquary,* No. 7—M. Rahaviengar's article on *Valmiki and Sauth India.*

† *Ind. Ant.* Vol. 1876, p. 89.

‡ *Ind. Ant.* Vol. 1876, p. 272—Girnar Inscription of Asoka.

those independent kingdoms of the South, but only by the rulers of those States themselves. Pliny mentions a tribe called Pandaea (Pandyas), who alone of the Indians were in the habit of having female sovereigns. Megasthenes says, 'Heracles begot a daughter in India whom he called Pandaea. To her he assigned that portion of India which lies to the southward, and extends to the sea; while he distributed the territory subject to her rule into 365 villages giving orders that one village should each day bring to the treasury the royal tribute, so that the queen might always have the assistance of those men, whose turn it was to pay the tribute, in coercing those who for the time being were defaulters in their payments'. The division of the territory into 365 villages or revenue units is an indication of the civil division of the Pandya Kingdom during the centuries anterior to the Christian era. It has already been stated how Pandaea possessed a great treasure in the fishery for pearls which were highly valued by the Greeks and the Romans. The Pandya rulers were great patrons of literature. The first two Madura Academies, if their very existence is not to be questioned at all, should be assigned to the centuries preceding the Christian era, and so the Pandya rulers during the centuries

preceding the Christian era should have presided over these Academies, and done not a little to promote the cause of sound learning and culture. The scanty materials that are available do not throw even this feeble light upon the condition of the other Tamil kingdoms of the south.

Having sketched, though in feeble and indistinct outlines, the system of polity as it obtained currency in the semi-historic period, we shall now pass on to a description of the ancient South Indian polity as it was in the historic period, a most remarkable, but none the less forgotten, period of its development. The early centuries of the Christian era form an important land-mark in the development of political institutions of the peoples of Peninsular India. Happily the numerous Tamil classical works of the epoch of the Third Sangam furnish the means of describing in outline some features at least of the polity, existing at the time, of the Tamil kingdoms, such as the social system, the fiscal system, the administrative system, the legal system, with some view of commerce and religion. It is also possible to deal with the political thought of ancient South India during the early centuries of the Christian era as exhibited in ancient Sangam works, and to present a picture, however dim

and shadowy, of the State and its duties during the period under review. It may also be unhesitatingly affirmed that the political organisation portrayed in these Sangam works was not simply an ideal sought after by the thinkers and writers of the day, but also an actual achievement. That there was phenomenal progress achieved in the field of polity, that the government in that distant age was not an undiluted, unmitigated despotism, but was subject to checks and counter-checks, that the ancient monarch carried on the government in consonance with high ideals and lofty principles, that he invariably sought the advice of a council of elders and certain popular assemblies, and that he had a great regard for public opinion which reigned as supreme as the law guarded by himself, these indisputable facts will, it is hoped, be apparent from a perusal of the following pages.

In the *Perumpanarruppadai*, a fine description of the Brahmans' quarters at a village in Tondainadu is thus given :—'The healthy calf tied to one of the posts in the pandal indicates that its mother the cow went out to the meadow. The milk-yielding cow was an indispensable animal in the house of a Brahman ; for the five-fold products from the cow were essential for vedic rites, as they are even

at present. Why the hen and the dog are mentioned is inexplicable.' The reference to the teaching of Vedic slokas to the parrots with aquiline bills by Brahmans is evidently an exaggeration. The Brahman wife was a paragon of chastity like the tiny star (near one of the seven stars known as the constellation of the Great Bear) in the northern horizon. She was an accomplished cook being well-versed in the preparation of highly relishing vegetarian diet. A particular kind of rice interpreted as *irasannam* (இராசான்னம்) by the commentator was the staple food in the house. In the Brahman villages only the vegetarian diet was available, but it was prepared in a highly relishing manner. The Brahman was noted for his cleanliness and religious austerities. He would readily feed with pleasure even low-caste minstrels. The *Tirumurugarruppadai* gives a true picture of the Brahman of the classic age. The Brahman should be born of a father and a mother sprung of totally different gotras of unsullied reputation such as Kasyapa. He should rear the three kinds of sacred fires; he is twice born, the first birth being his natural birth, and the second being the one he assumes during the holy thread ceremony; he should wear a holy thread of nine strings; when worshipping God Muruga, he should be in wet attire

dripping water; his raised hands should rest on his head, and his mouth should devoutly mutter gently the six mystic syllables of Muruga's name.

The Sages conducted *yagas* or holy sacrifices. 'They were the most honoured among the pure Tamils. They professed to know the three stages of time, that is, the past, present, and future. They led a retired and religious life, dwelling outside the great towns.' The Vaisyas constituted the trading class. Their virtues strike the reader with admiration. These traders were virtuous, and helped in the the propagation of virtue among other classes. By their advice, flesh-eaters became vegetarian, and robbers and thieves gave up their ignoble calling. In strict conformity with the injunctions laid down in the Vedas, they worshipped the celestial beings (Devas), and conducted holy sacrifices. They manifested boundless grace towards cows and bulls. They maintained the dignity of the Brahmans, and performed charities in the name of those who could not afford to do them, so that they might reap the consequent blessings. They sumptuously fed the hungry. Traders though they were, they spoke only the naked and unadorned truth. In making bargains, they carefully avoided all sorts of illegitimate gain. They made a clean

breast of the net profit they made by their dealings. Agriculture was practised by the Vellalas. From the higher kind of Vellalas, the major and the minor dynasties of kings were chosen. Next in rank to the Vellalas were the shepherds and huntsmen. Below these were the artisans such as goldsmiths, carpenters, potters, etc. After these came the military class (*i.e.*,) the Padaiachchier or the armed men. Last of all were the Valayar and Pulayar or the fishermen and scavengers respectively. The distinction of the four castes Brahma, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra observed by the Aryas did not exist among the Tamils. The expression 'twice-born', applied by the Aryans to those who were sanctified by the investiture of the sacred thread, was always used in ancient Tamil literature to denote only the Brahmans, and it is evident therefore that the Kshatriya and the Vaisya, who wore the sacred thread, were not known in *Tamilakam*.

Strong-bodied mlechchas and Maravas beautify their bodies with garlands, get drunk with fermenting toddy, and wander with mirth riotously everywhere in the streets of large cities like Madura. Innocent damsels at sunset light oily wicks in the lamps, and adore the household deities with flowers and paddy grains. In the guarded

houses of the rich, servant boys are busy in preparing pastes of musk upon the black mortars. There were halls with flags for discussions between disputing philosophers. There were the residences of sages and penancing devotees. Hypnotic dances of *velan*, the dances of females, religious festivities, and musical entertainments could be witnessed everywhere. The business of entertainment should have provided a livelihood for different classes of persons such as dancers. There is a reference to dancing maids who press their lutes tight to their warm bosoms to heat the strings at sunset in winter, and tune their chords to suit admirably to their dance. There were charity-houses, wherein the poor and the needy were fed. The *conji* flew out in streams, which were rendered miry by bulls fighting with one another. The ceaselessly plying cars rendered the mire into dust, which rose up, and spoiled the paintings in the adjoining temples. There were charity-houses for feeding stray cattle.

The classic age was characterised by a sad feature. People other than Brahmans were addicted to drink, gluttony, and flesh-eating. There seemed to have been no sumptuous dinner without these vices. The minstrel, who was directed to the king for receiving a fit reward, was encouraged by the

hope of a sumptuous flesh diet throughout his long way from the different peoples. Vegetarianism was in fact a later growth. No doubt there should have been honourable exceptions among the Saivas and the Jains in those days. Rice was pounded with long pestles bordered with strong iron rings. These rings by constant employment underwent much wear and tear, and became blunt and smooth. This custom is still in vogue. *Maduraikkanchi* tells us that clothes were washed in sour rice-water, and ironed, as is the custom even at the present day in remote villages.

In certain houses monkeys were brought up like children. Young monkeys and children played together. Elephants were trained in a northern language by lads of the Tamil race. In the *Chintamani* one of the Five Ancient Tamil Epics, this practice is referred to. Elephants were fed with rice smeared well in ghee by keepers. The Dravidians used to catch wild elephants in pitfalls dug in the woods; but the Aryans introduced the ingenious method of decoying wild elephants by tame female elephants. From *Mullaippatu* we learn that there were oracles at the shrine of *Korravai*, which used to be consulted by the people on emergencies. When the king was about to go on a

warlike expedition, the queen was disconsolate. Old matrons in attendance upon the queen consulted the oracle, and informed her that the king would return triumphant. Then the queen consented to the king's departure.

In the classical age, Puhar or Kaverippumpattinam, situated at the mouth of the Kaveri, was a thriving emporium, and the capital of the Chola kingdom. To the seaport of Puhar, ships from all parts of the then known world brought cargoes of merchandise, which were speedily conveyed to the inland towns. It was famous enough to count among its inhabitants men of different nationalities that had resorted to it probably on trade business or for amassing fortune. Greeks from Alexandria and Arabs from Mecca jostled in its streets with Romans and with men from all the Eastern regions. The bazaar thoroughfare at Puhar was the scene of unceasing festivals. There were arrays of flags on either side of the bazaar road. In the bazaar in Madura, flags of beauty used to be raised in honour of divine festivals. Besides, there were flags to commemorate the capture of foreign cities by the generals of the king. Flags in honour of triumphs in war waved majestically like cataracts flowing down the hills. Elephants, cars drawn by brilliant horses, and magnificent chargers mounted by trained

riders passed and repassed through the bazaar thoroughfare. In the bazaar were to be seen pedlars and sellers of petty articles of merchandise, such as fragrant unknit flowers, garlands of variegated colours, perfumed powders manufactured by the joint work of several persons, who had divided the labour between themselves, betel leaves, spiced areca nuts and lime slaked from burnt shells. There were the manufacturers of bangles from conches, goldsmiths, cloth merchants, painters, weavers offering their clothes for sale, and sellers of vegetables. Customs were levied at all the sea-ports. Tolls were collected on the trunk-roads used by caravans and at the frontier of each kingdom. Wine and other intoxicating liquors were imported into India by the Bactrian Greeks or Yavanas. We have already referred in detail to the commercial activity of this epoch. The state of society corresponding to this activity of trade, to the traffic on high roads, the bustle at frontiers, customs-houses, tolls, and to the minute regulation of these must have been one of considerable complexity. Naturally there should have been a considerable growth of luxury consequent upon the rise of the Tamil kingdoms like the Chola and the Pandya to preeminence in the South.

We learn from *Porunararruppadai* that clothes of very fine texture with beautiful embroidery were manufactured in Tamilakam. Foreign influences also began to assert themselves. There should have taken place a considerable advance in art during this period. Marvellous machines were constructed by the Tamils*, and great architectural works were carried out under the supervision of the Yavanas. From *Nedunalvadai* we learn that these Yavanas were excellent artists versed in the construction of metal statues, and apparently the Tamils should have learnt this art from them. The science and practice of the fine arts were highly developed among the ancient Tamils. The study of music was an essential part of a liberal education. Dancing was cultivated as a fine art, and there were text-books already composed, in which rules were given in detail for the performance of the several kinds of dancing then in vogue. In the arts of painting and sculpture, the Tamils had acquired a considerable degree of proficiency. Figures of gods, men, and animals were painted with a variety of colours on the walls of private houses and public buildings, such as temples and palaces.

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* Silappathikaram, Adaikalakkathai.

'The dress worn by the Tamil people varied according to their rank in society and the race to which they belonged. The Brahmans cropped their hair leaving a small tuft on the top of the head. The soldiers employed to guard the public thoroughfares and the servants in the king's palace wore coats. A full dress was the outward sign of a servant rather than of a master. Women mixed freely in the business and amusements of social life. From the queen downwards, every woman visited the temples. Every town and village had its street of harlots, and in the great cities there were educated courtezans. The courtezans honoured by the special regard of the king were allowed to travel in carriages or palanquins, to visit the royal parks, and to use betel boxes made of gold. Boys were considered marriageable at sixteen, and girls at twelve years of age. All the villages and towns were fortified against the attacks of robbers and enemies.''* Owing to the freedom enjoyed by women it was possible for young people to court each other before marriage. One most curious custom referred to in the Sangam works is that of a disappointed lover proclaiming his love in the public

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***Extracts from V. Kanakasabhai Pillai's** *The Tamils 1800 Years Ago*, **pp. 116-130.**

streets and committing suicide. In the narrow world of an ancient South Indian village, a courtship could be carried on only with much difficulty. The lovers had to meet under cover of night at some appointed place in the outskirts of the village. At such meetings, the young woman was always accompanied by her confidante. Nallanthuvanar's *Kalithokai* throws much interesting light on the modes of life, manners, and sentiments of the ancient Tamil people. The lovers had met a few times before at night; and the young lady's confidante, solicitous about her companion's reputation and with a view to hasten the man's making a public proposal of marriage to her, would like to terminate such private interviews. She therefore weaves a delicate tissue of fiction; and within hearing of the man narrates it to her companion pointing out the peril of such meetings as a moral of the story, and conveying to the man a gentle hint to immediately make a public proposal for the lady's hand to her parents.

One national virtue of the Tamils was the hospitality they invariably showed to the poor and the needy. The ideal of the people was that virtue should be ever on the increase, and that vice should go on diminishing. To love mankind, to seek their welfare,

to relieve the distressed and the needy, not to compass evil and become hateful, not to stab people in the dark, and not to despise and glory over the fallen are some of the many lessons conveyed in the *Kalitokai*.* The model housewife must be gentle, loving, industrious, and, above all, obedience itself. Valluvar, the author of the Kural, was once asked, whether the married state or celibacy was chiefly to be desired. He gave no answer, but invited the inquirer to wait and see. Valluvar's wife was drawing water from the well. He called to her, and, leaving the bucket hanging midway, she instantly came. At dinner he complained that the cold rice burnt his mouth, and his wife immediately fanned it. "Next day, while the sun shone clear and bright, he cried out that he could not see to read. She brought at once a light." 'This', said Valluvar to his visitor, 'is domestic felicity. If you can have such a wife, marry; otherwise, prefer celibacy'. It is further related of this model wife, that, having during her life performed unhesitatingly her husband's every behest, at her death she asked him first, and last, and only question. 'Tell me,' she said, 'Why, at our marriage, did you require of me a needle and a pot of water?'

* J. M. Nallaswami Pillai p. 18-S. Dipika Vol. 8.

'It was', he replied, "that I might with the needle pick up a grain of rice, should one ever be spilt, and dip it in the water'. No grain of rice had ever been suffered by this model house-wife to fall in serving her husband's meal. The needle and the pot of water had never been used. She died content. We would like to have more scenes of real life such as this among the ancient Tamils.

In the *Manimekalai*, there is a reference to the celebration of the feast of Indra. The herald seated on an elephant proclaimed to all the inhabitants of Puhar, "Decorate your temples and your houses. Let garlands hang through every street from every window. Let the sound of every species of music be heard throughout all your borders. Let merchants and dealers fill every avenue in all that is beautiful and precious. Let the temples of every religion and sect be crowded with devout worshippers. Let the teachers of every school deliver their lectures, hold disputations, discuss their tenets, and promulgate their faith. Thus let the city be filled with peace and gladness." It is refreshing to come upon passages like this in this great classical work which gives us an accurate and graphic picture of the life led by the Tamilians eghteen centuries ago. During these festivals, there were fairs

on a magnificent scale. It was the custom for all the actresses, dancing girls, and songstresses to give magnificent entertainments on these occasions.

We shall now proceed to sketch briefly the religion of the Tamils in the early centuries of the Christian era. Valluvar's religion is the religion of the Dravidians. Valluvar systematised the ethics of the Dravidian community, and as well built up a system for them. His system is a high-water mark of excellence. He is a utilitarian of the noblest type and a thinker of the loftiest order. His conception of the good of the community and the law of service enjoined upon the member of that community to contribute to that good is well conceived. In the chapter on *Oppuravarithal* (ஒப்புரவறிதல்) in his sacred *Kural*, Valluvar, the ablest exponent of the Dravidian religion and philosophy, formulates the most comprehensive and far-reaching ideal of service to the good of the community or nation. In the thought-region, Valluvar is a prodigy and a type of Dravidian intellect, nothing short of meteoric. In the opening chapter of the *Kural*, a perfect ethical and religious code, the Godhead is described as the first and indivisible, the supremely wise, the heart-dweller, the sense-destroyer, the passionless, the incompar-

able, the good, and the possessor of noble attributes. Valluvar's creed is not a godless creed. His God is the first cause and lord. He is intelligent. He is immaculate, and untainted by likes and dislikes. He is the Lord of lords and King of kings. He is the source of all dharma and beneficence. He has eight attributes. Valluvar describes God by the terms *Chemporul* (செம்பொருள்=Good being), *Ullathu* (உள்ளது=The Existent), and *Meypporal* (மெய்ப்பொருள் =True being). According to Valluvar, "no amount of learning is of any good, unless a man believes in the existence of God, and worships His Feet in all love and truth. The references to the deities Indra, Vishnu, Siva, Lakshmi, and Brahma would seem to argue Valluvar's faith in symbology, despite his alleged aloofness from particular creeds.*

The deities of the Sangam period, as seen from the other works of this age, were Siva of the dark throat, Baladeva of white colour, Krishna of the deep blue colour, and Subramanya, the Red One. In Puhar and Madura, there were temples dedicated in honor of these deities as well as of Indra. One of the oldest of South Indian shrines is devoted to the worship of Krishna. The Sangam literature affords abundant evidence to show the supre-

* *Vide Kurul*—Stanzas 398, 610, 580, 615, and 1062.

macy of Siva. The latter is given the front place among the gods in *Maduraikkanchi*. In all the introductory invocations of the Sangam works, Siva's form and grace are dealt with. There are many references to the worship of Siva throughout the *Purananuru*. God Subramanya was a great favourite deity with the Tamils. He resided with splendour in six favourite places such as Tirupparamkunram, Tiruchendur, Palani, Tiruverakam, Alagar-Koil, and Kunrutoradal. There should have been shrines dedicated to Subramanya in these places. The Tamil God Muruga was the common object of worship to the Aryans and the Tamils. The poem *Tirumurugarrup-padai* clearly shows the readiness with which the Aryans incorporated the traditions and religious beliefs of the Tamils. God Subramanya condescends to accept the obeisance of mortals to him in whatever form it may be given. Bloody sacrifices were offered by the people in villages to this deity. Sacrifices of sheep were offered to the God. Hypnotic dances were in vogue in honour of this God. The rudiments of Vaishnavism are also traceable in the Sangam works. In this body of literature there are references to Rama and Krishna. Besides the cult of Siva, the cult of Vishnu also was coming into prominence. Much importance was at-

tached to sacrifices. The *Vedic* learning was much esteemed.

An interesting account of Buddhism is given in the classical work, *Manimekalai.* The chief problem that confronted the Buddhists was, ' How to get freed from birth which is unmixed pain.' The solution they arrived at may be expressed in the words of the *Manimekalai* thus ; ' The born are doomed to ever-increasing pain ; those who will not be born are blessed with eternal beatitude. Of attachment the former is an outcome and by renunciation the latter is doomed.' The *Manimekalai* contains references only to the Mahayana form of Buddhism. The fabric of Buddha's teachings rests on the foundation of the four Satyas. " The ever-increasing misery by attachment is caused, the happiness of emancipation by non-attachment secured. These conjointly form the ' Four Principles of Truth." The lines of the *Manimekalai* that deal with the origin of misery are almost taken verbatim from the Buddhistic Text, the *Tripitaka* : " Of ignorançe are actions the result, and from actions knowledge proceeds. Knowledge gives rise to name and form, and they in turn to the five organs of sense and the mind. These organs six, of contact with things, are the cause. On contact depending, ex-

perience comes. Of experience desire is the outcome. And desire to attachment gives rise. Attachment, of an aggregate of actions, is the root. On this aggregate based all birth proceeds; with birth, old age, disease and death, pain and weeping, suffering and care, and despair, all the fruits of actions. Thus is said the origin of misery." The means of obtaining freedom from misery is then described: "With ignorance departs actions all; with actions, the knowledge that differentiates. When knowledge departs, names and forms along. Names and forms departing, the organs six are no more. With the organs six, the contact with things does leave, and contact with it the faculty of experience does steal. With experience vanish all kinds of desire. And desire fails not attachment to take. Attachment to Karma deals a death blow. Karma falling, the wheel of birth no longer turns. When freedom from birth is secured, secured also is freedom from old age, disease and death, pain and weeping, suffering and care, despair and all the rest." In another place it is stated that whosoever born among men cares to know the characteristics of these twelve, ignorance (Avidya), actions (Samskaras), differentiating knowledge (Vijnana), name and form (Nama Rupa), six organs (Shadayatanas),

contact with things (Sparsa), experience (Vedana), desire (Trshna), attachment (Upadana), aggregate of actions (Bhava), birth (Janma), and the fruits of actions (Karmapala), knows also the great Nirvana".* The ten sinful actions that should be avoided in all religious practices by all kinds of practitioners irrespective of their stage of life (Grahasta or Sannyasi) are 'killing, stealing, and lusting, these three appertaining to the body; lying, tale bearing, using hot words, indulging in vain talk, these four to utterance belonging; desire, anger, and delusion, these three in the mind springing.' An examination into the old Buddhistic customs reveals to us that women also were permitted to become Sannyasins, and that in that stage of life they were known as Bhikshunis. From the *Manimekalai* we learn that Matavi hearing of the sad death of Kovalan at Madura spends the remainder of her life in a Buddhist monastery. The heroine Manimekalai herself finally settles at Kanchi to perform penance with a view to attain Nirvana. We learn from the *Manimekalai* that the Jain saints were generally heartless and unsympathetic. Jainism partly failed from a lack of human sympathy. The Jains were more anxious

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* *Vide Manimekalai*, Stanza 30, lines 51-103, and *the Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. IV, p. 112.

to show mercy and pity to the animal creation than to suffering humanity. Buddhism on the other hand showed an astonishing sympathy with all human infirmity. Buddha is represented as a tender, most loving friend of men*

Besides the Buddhist system of philosophy, there were in the Tamil land according to the *Manimekalai* five other systems of philosophy such as Lokayatam, Sankhyam, Naiyayikam, Vaiseshikam, and Mimamsakam, and the authors of these systems were Brihaspati, Kapila, Akshapatha, Kanada, and Jaimini respectively. In describing the dectrines of each of the above systems, the *Manimekalai* does not give any account of the Nyaya; but in its place it mentions the Ajivaka and Nigranta philosophies which were evidently the representatives of the older Nyaya systems. The existence of these numerous schools show the religious activity of the people in the Tamil land. Thus Saivism, Vishnavism, Buddhism, and Jainism were all prevalent, and were allowed to prosper peacefully without persecution. There were the monasteries of the Jains and the Buddhists. Men with their wives and children used to go with flowers to the Buddhist churches during nights. Religious toleration

* G. U. Pope—S. Dipika, Vol. XI No. 8 p. 344.

was a marked feature of the academic times in the Tamil country.

The religious liberty which the Tamils enjoyed had a great and salutary influence upon their intellectual and moral development. By softening feelings and manners, Buddhism powerfully contributed to the amelioration of the social state. The Nigrantas and Buddhists, holding up a high ideal of morality, exercised a profound influence upon moral and intellectual order and upon public ideas and sentiments. The pure conceptions of morality of the ancient Tamils, so well-embodied in their classical literature, constituted the real enduring basis of their civilization.

From the *Pattinappalai* we learn that a temple for worship was known as *Ambalam*. The most supreme deity worshipped by the Dravidians, it has already been stated, was known as *Kanthali*. *Kanthu* was the place where the God was supposed to remain. It was also regarded as a symbol to represent God who is with shape and without shape. Nakkirar also testifies to the prevalence of this idea of God. The invisible, unthinkable Deity cannot be given forms as we like, and so a symbol called *Kanthu* was erected. The numerous references to the four Vedas, Vedic Brahmans and Sages, and Vedic sacrifices,

the allusions to the worship of gods, the nature of the deities and objects of this life and of the life to come, described in these classical works, all go to prove that the Tamilians had greatly assimilated the Aryan system of religion in the third Sangam epoch.

Another point deserves to be noted. Some of the classical Tamil poems contain not merely references to theistic Gods such as Siva and Vishnu, but also to the four *Vyuhas*. The orthodox Hinduism, which had found a home in the South, underwent a certain degree of modification 'towards subordinating the purely ritualistic part of the Brahmanic religion by a very strong infusion of the devotional element in it.' Since the Brahman was duly discharging his duties as a sacrificer to the community as a whole, people other than Brahmans were already looking forward 'to the attainment of earthly prosperity here in this world and salvation in the next by the comparatively easier method of devotion, each to the god of his heart.' The notion of a God and that of a ministering priest to stand between God and individual man already came into relief. This peculiar feature of devotion to God under the right guidance of a preceptor is a feature peculiar to *Bhakti*.

Thus the indigenous Dravidian religion, subjected to the mellowing influences of Buddhism, Jainism, and the vedic religion, gave rise in due time to the sweet, practical, and heart-enthralling culture of the Tamils, of which the Tamil classics, together with the soul-stirring Saiva and Vaishnava hymnology, not to mention the mighty and majestic God-aspiring temples of *Tamilakam*, constitute even to-day the imperishable monuments of beauty and glorious divine enthusiasm. 'In the study of the history of religion', according to Albrecht Weber, 'we are enabled to follow the different phases undergone by an idea from its first inception to its culminating point. That which is at the beginning is not only simple ; it is also the better, the right, and the true. But in the course of its development foreign elements continue to make their influence felt till, when we reach our goal, we are frequently confronted with something altogether opposed to the propositions from which we started. Superstition has made itself master of the situation, and like the fabled mermaid, we see a lovely maiden ending in an ugly fish.' But happily for South India, the religion of the Dravidians, at the period we have now reached (*i.e.*) the early centuries of the Christian era, was all the better for the absorption of the

alien elements from the north, and already showing promise of a brilliant future, and the diverse seeds of many religions, sown on South Indian soil, were already germinating, and well on the way towards bearing rich and abundant fruit in the shape of the *Saiva Siddhanta* system ef the next epoch.

References may here be made to a few sources which, besides the Tamil classics, throw a few welcome rays of light upon the political organisation of the Tamils in the historical period. The Kurumbars, it has already been stated elsewhere, were a pastoral tribe living in the region from the base of the tableland to the Palar and Pennar rivers known as Tondamandalam. They were attacked by an army under Adondai or Tondaiman, the illegitimate son of Karikal Chola, and subjugated. This Tondaiman, under instructions from Karikal Chola, introduced civilization and political and social institutions suited to a civilized people in this once barbarous land. Fragmentary notices of their political and social organisation may be gathered from the essay of F. W. Ellis on land tenures and from traditionary statements preserved in the *Mackenzie Collection of Mss.* They appear to have formed a sort of confederate state, under chiefs of their own, each of whom

resided in a fortified stronghold, having a district of greater or less extent uuder its jurisdiction denominated a *Kottam* (from *Kottai*, a fort or castle), the largest of which was recognised as the head of the union. Of the *kottams* there were twenty-four each consisting of one or more *nadus* and each *nadu* sub-divided into several *nattams* or townships. It is quite probable that this kind of organisation was the one introduced by Tondaiman. If this be so, this must have been the system in vogue in the Chola country. Tondaiman could not have newly evolved from his own brain the institutions he is stated to have set up in the land of the Palar, but only transplanted them from the Chola country to which he belonged. It does not do much violence to truth and historical accuracy, if we maintain that the institutions whose remains were noticed by Ellis and other scholars, are the primitive polity of the Cholas in the early centuries of the Christian era.

The Tamil classics also confirm this testimony about the administrative divisions of the Tamil land. The unit of administration was the village or a group of villages. The villages in the Tamil country were known as **Pattinam or Pakkam, Ur, Sirur, Padi, Palli, Cheri, and Kuruchi.** A certain geographical

area containing a number of these units constituted a small division which in the Tondamandalam was dominated by a fort, while in the Chola country an important town or city dominated it. A number of these bigger units taken together constituted a district ; a number of these districts in turn united to form a division giving us the regular gradation indicated in the Pallava and Chola copper-plates and inscriptions of a later period. Nadu was the biggest division, and pakkam, ur, cheri, or kurichi the smallest according to the divisions of the country into *neythal* ,*marutham*, *mullai* or *kurunji* respectively. The big *nadus* called in later days *mandalam* were ruled by crowned monarchs (முடிவேந்தர்கள்). Under them were subordinate kings (குறுநில மன்னர்கள்), who ruled over a *kurram*, comprising a number of townships and villages. There were also com manders of the army who were given a similar charge.

It is said that in the provinces and townships there were *Panchayats* consisting of old and respectable men of the various localities who helped the heads of provinces and townships in the administration of justice. 'The constitution of these popular assemblies was quite democratic. From what we know of the *Panchayat* during the days of the Pallava and

the Chola ascendancy, between the eighth and the eleventh centuries A.D., we can infer that the members were elected by the people, and the assembly took cognizance of all matters of local importance, and settled every difference between one individual and another. *Puram* 266 gives us an idea of its great popularity and the confidence of the public in the integrity and the wisdom of its members. Public opinion was very strong in these local bodies, and none dared to offend them by disobeying their orders.* † We have references to the meeting of assemblies in the classical works. The poet Perungadungo says that the Kosars true to their plighted word appeared at the place of assembly suddenly with war drums beating and conch resounding. This place of assembly was underneath the shade of an old and ancient banyan tree with magnificent branches. In *Tamilakam,* the chief and ryots would frequently meet for purposes of common deliberation underneath the tall and shady banyan tree with its branches spread far and wide. In the *Tirumurugarruppadai*, there is a reference to the spreading tree under which village elders used to meet for transacting public

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* *The Christian College Magazine, Quarterly Series,* Vol IV, p. 168.

† *Vide Kurunthokai*, 15, Aham 251.

business.* On the existing tribal and communal organisations, a central administration was superimposed. The Tamil classics like the *Kural* teach us the character of the central organisation † 'which welded the local organisations for local purposes into one unity which might be the state of those times. The local organisations were certainly of a democratic character, and rested for certain purposes on the communal basis. The devolution of power was complete. The central organisation has merely the control of local administration, the maintenance of peace and order in the country and providing for defence against external enemies'.

According to Valluvar, the constituent elements of a State are the minister, people, resources, allies, army, and fortresses. That is a great country which never fails in its yield of harvests, which is the abode of sages, which attracts men to itself by the greatness of its wealth, and which yields abundantly being free from pests, which is free from famines and plagues, and which is safe from the invasions of enemies. The country, which has known no devastation at the hands of its foes and

* **Tamilian Antiquary No. 5—Prof. Sundaram Pillai's article on the Ten Tamil Idylls.**

† *Vide Some contributions of South India to Indian Culture* **—Dr S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar.**

which, even should it suffer any, would not bate one whit in its yield, will be called a jewel among the countries of the world. The waters of the surface, the waters that flow underground, rain water, well-situated mountains, strong fortifications, these are indispensable to every country. The nation, which is not divided into warring sects, which is free from murderous anarchists, and which has, no traitors within its bosom to ruin it, is truly great.

Fortresses are helpful not only to the weak, who think only of their defence, but also to the strong and powerful. Watercourses, deserts, mountains, thick jungles—all these constitute various kinds of defensive barriers. Height, thickness and impregnability, these are requisites that science demands of fortresses. That is the best fortress which is vulnerable in very few places, which is spacious and capable of breaking the assaults of those that attempt to take it, which affords facility of defence for the garrison, which is filled with stores of every kind, which is garrisoned by men that will make a brave defence, which cannot be reduced by a regular siege, by storm, or even by mining, which has been rendered impregnable by works of various kinds, and which enables the defenders to fell

down their adversaries. The poet Mulamkilar of Aiyur, in referring to the different parts of a fortification, says, 'There was first of all a moat so deep that it reached down to the abodes of demons; this was crowned with turrets, from which the archers shot forth their arrows; there was an impervious wood that surrounded small forts at every angle.'

The town of Madura is bedecked with sky-reaching mansions, which everywhere appear like the beds of large rivers. The royal mansion is enclosed by high fortified walls. The ditches round the fort are deep with blue water. The ramparts of stone rise into the region of the celestials. The ornamented gate with its massive doors appears like a huge tunnel cut through a mountain; the gate with doors ever smeared with ghee is broad and high enough to allow the passage of fully-caparisoned elephants along with triumphal banners. 'The gates of the fort are busy like the ceaselessly flowing river with throngs of men who pass incessantly under it.' To drive the darkness throughout night, metallic statues constructed by Yavanas bear lamps in their hands, and there are servants who carefully watch the lamps, and pour oil into them as it is exhausted. Flags of various hues waving over the high mansions present the

appearance of rainbows seen on mountain summits. The royal couch made of ivory is grand beyond description. It has a silk curtain whose borders are ornamented with hanging pearls; mattresses and cushions stuffed with the soft down of eider duck are laid upon the couch. The queen's ornamental mansion contains seven storeys. Madura resembles the celestial city; it is the fit city for salvation. Puhar, the capital of the Chola kingdom, was as usual in those days surrounded by a fort. The fort opened by a gate, and upon the massive doors of which the tiger-mark was worked, as it was the ensign of the Chola, just as the fish-mark was that of the Pandya. Around the city and the royal residence were a series of gardens planted with trees, shrubs, and plants interspersed with memorials to the dead and with various consecrated buildings. Each of these was surrounded by a high wall, and there were gates strictly guarded, leading from one to the other. In the vicinity of these gates, statues were placed in which various divine or semi-divine personages were supposed to dwell, frequently exchanging a word with the passers-by. In the account of the inauguration of the feast of Indra we get some glimpses of the arrangements of the city. It was divided into two parts, of which one lay along the harbour,

and presented the characteristics of a modern seaport town. The other, which was some distance inland, was the abode of the wealthy. There was the palace, and its streets were full of the abodes of luxury and splendour. Between these two was a square of considerable extent, where the markets were held, and bazaars of every kind of merchandise were found. There were two special demons called 'the demon of the market' and the 'demon of the square' who had shrines and images at either end of this square. Their special function was to punish and even devour those that were guilty of gross sins. The citizens were heard to say that, if they neglected to keep the feast, the Bhutas would cease to guard them by punishing wicked persons. The palace of Nannan, the chieftain of Konkan, lies close to the river, Sevar. A class of warriors maintain the military dignity of Nannan, and lances which brought about the destruction of his foes rest on the walls, and strike terror into the hearts of foreign visitors. There is a menagerie in front of his mansion, where the cubs of tigers and bears are confined in cages; several other animals such as the deer, the wild sheep, the guana, the mongoose, the peacock, the jungle-fowl, and the elephant find their respective places therein. There is also

a botanical garden. The far-famed city of Puhar also had in its vicinity orchards, flower gardens, banks, and tanks. The royal menagerie at Madura contained several wild beasts such as tigers and bears. The town of Kanchi was encircled by brick walls. The broad streets of Kanchi were full of deep grooves made by the wheels of the huge cars which plied often in them. There were also the quarters for soldiers whose military glory never grew dim. The bazaars were intensely busy. Festivals adored by all religionists were almost continuously held in the streets of the victorious city.

The queen's bosom was ornamented by necklaces of gems. Her soft wrists were adorned by bracelets of gold. She was dressed in silk clothes with flower embroidery. Her feet used to be shampooed by attendant maids. 'Dwarfs, hunchbacks, and eunuchs, besides a number of noble maidens, waited upon the queen. On all public occasions the queen took her seat on the throne along with the king. She did not wear a crown, unless she had inherited the monarchy in her own right.'

The education of royal youths was so adjusted as to fit them for their high and exalted station. They were given a Spartan training, so for as their physical development was concerned.

From boyhood they were placed under expert tutors, and were trained in the use of arms, in riding on elephants and horses, and in driving chariots.

The king should possess a strong and striking personality. A tall stature, long arms touching the knee, legs that have become stout and firm by driving elephants, ankles bearing the marks of anklets worn on them, the right hand turned inwards being accustomed to hold the arrows, and the left hand holding the bow, a broad chest—these constitute a few of the characteristics of a king of the Tamil land. Besides, the king wore on his body a warrior dress (வீரவுடை), a special wreath (வீரமாலை), and a golden anklet (வீரக்கழல்). The king wore a long crown of a conical shape made of gold and set with precious stones. The kings sat on a royal chair of costly workmanship—a kind of mancha or cot (அரசுகட்டில்) made of ivory, gold, and gems and surmounted with costly cushions—the whole raised on lions' heads carved on the four corners of it.

The king was served by the eight groups of attendants such as perfumers, garland-makers, betel-bearers, areca-nut servers, armourers, dressing valets, torch-bearers, and body guards. That the body-guards of the Indian princes and maid servants of the royal

household were mainly composed of Yavana youths and girls is all clearly indicated in the old Tamil classics. These Yavanas are described as strong-bodied soldiers guarding the king's room.

The king must have courage, liberality, wisdom, energy, alertness, learning, and decision. He should not fail in virtue, should not sin against the laws of valour, and should know how to develop and safeguard the agricultural and mineral resources of his kingdom, how to enrich his treasury, preserve his wealth, and spend it worthily. The king shall devote himself assiduously to works that are commended by the wise. If he neglects them, he will suffer in all his future births. Though the glory of the king is a strong army, yet virtue is his chief strength. He must have strength like that of the sun, grace like that of the moon, and charity like that of the rain. He should guide his people and the affairs of state, as one guides a car on a proper road. Such are a few of the qualifications of a king. Parsimony, over-confidence, and excessive amour, these are the faults which a prince should avoid.

'The king's time was divided among his three main duties, (*viz.*) the pursuit of wealth of virtue, and of pleasure. The day was wholly

spent in transacting the business of state, and the night was reserved for secret council meetings, and for the reception of spies, and secret embassies. Of the twelve hours of the day, the first four the king utilised in the pursuit of virtue. The king was awakened in the early hours of the morning by the blowing of conches.' For example, we are told Nedun-cheliyan got up early, and bathed and adorned his beautiful person with rich ornaments. Every morning a grand durbar was held in the audience hall, and the people of all classes found ready admission to it. He sent for soldiers, warriors, and generals who had done meritorious service on his behalf, and enlivened them with encouragement. 'The next four hours he spent with his wife, relations, and children in the inner apartments of the palace. The four closing hours of the day were spent in looking after the revenue affairs, the collection of taxes and tribute, and the scrutiny of State charges in their various forms.'

The ideals that a king should place before himself are also described. He should give with grace, and rule with love. He must administer impartial justice, and consult the men of law. A king (or a judge) should mete out due justice without swerving ever so little in favour (or disfavour) of the rich or the poor;

any divergence in the course of justice resembles a river of milk with a water current in its course.* The king shall measure the guilt of the offender, and punish him so that he offendeth not again ; but the punishment shall not be excessive. Those that desire that their power shall last, let them brandish their rod smartly, but lay it on soft. Men look up to the sceptre of the king for protection. His sceptre is the mainstay of the Brahmans and of righteousness. In the land of the king who wields the sceptre in accordance with the law, seasonal rains and rich harvests have their home. It is not the lance but the sceptre that brings victory to the king. His umbrella should protect the oppressed. The king, that guards his subjects from enemies both within and without, may punish his subjects when they go wrong. It is not a blemish but his duty. Punishing the wicked with death is like the removing of weeds from the cornfield. The tutelary goddess, *ManimekalaDeyvam*, having left *Manimekalai* in the Island of Mani-Pallavam returned, and finding out the disappointed udayakumaran addressed him as follows :—

"——Oh son of the king !
If the king swerve from right, the prosperity of the land will fail,

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* Palamoli, Stanza 5.

If equity fail, rain will cease to fall.
If rain cease to fall, human life will fail.
Human life is to the king as his own life.
So all things fail when the king fails in virtue.
So cease thou the vain pursuit of her who is
Dedicated to an ascetic life".

From the stories related to the king by the sages of the Chakravalakkottam described in *Manimekalai*, we learn that the Tamil kings used to punish in seven days those who committed crimes. When the king came to know that Prince Udayakumaran had been caught and slain in an amorous intrigue, he exclaimed, 'The ascetic duties of renouncing sages and woman's chastity cannot exist, if kings guard not as them befits', and ordered that his son's body should be thrown into the earth with the wheel of chariot upon it, so that all might know that one unworthy had been born in his royal line.

The triumph of the king is the result of the produce of the soil raised from the sweat of the cultivator. When there is drought and dearth, and people become wicked, the world will blame the king. Without listening to lying counsel, when cultivators are protected, and through them other people also, then will

the king merit the praise of even his enemies. When the king grants his great love and peace to his people, his people feel for his safety as for themselves. He should be accessible to all his subjects, and be never harsh of word. He should have the virtue to bear with words that are bitter to the ear. The king, who is not easy of access, and who judges not causes with care, will fall from his place, and perish ,even when he has no enemy. In poem 35, *Purananuru*, the poet says addressing the king, 'Be easy of access at fitting time, as though the lord of justice sat to hear and decree right. Such kings have rain on their dominions at their will : kings get the blame, whether rains fail or flow copiously, and lack the praise ; such is the usage of the world.' The king is the life of the people, as will be seen from the following stanza :

> Foodstuff is not the life nor water ;
> The king is the life of the world,
> Therefore to know he is the life,
> Is the duty of the king with a large army.
>
> *Purananuru*, 186.

Can any statesman of the present day give a better advice to a king than what is stated in the following stanza of Purananuru :—

> Oh mighty king, Lord of the spacious
> forest lands,

Where elephants spread over the land
like grazing herds,
Commingled with dark rocks like buffalos!
Since thou art supreme in power, one
thing I say to thee
Be not one with those who, void of grace
and love,
Become the prey to endless woes in hell!
Let thy dominion be as care of tender
babes!
That is true tenderness, in this world rare
to find!

Purananuru, 5

The duties of the rulers enjoined in these poems and the code of political morality that breathes through most of them are very high.

It is pleasing to note that these high ideals were completely realised. 'The Council of Uraiyur, impregnable city of the valiant Cholas, was famous as being the abode of equity.' * When Pandyan Neduncheliyan was told by pilgrims that some North Indian rulers insulted him and other Tamil princes, he is reported to have exclaimed, 'I shall defeat those rulers and make them carry stones; otherwise let me be known as the king who tyrannised over his subjects.' Thus oppression of the people by a monarch was considered most abominable in

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* Purananuru, verse 39.

those days, and unworthy of the ancient Tamil rulers. The Tamil classics inculcated obedience and fervent loyalty to the king. From the Marutham of Orampogiar (Aingurunuru), we learn that the loyalty of the Tamilian to his king was very deep-rooted. Treachery to the king (*i. e.*) *rajadroham* was regarded as one of the worst sins a man could be guilty of. The prowess of the king in war, his immutable justice and accessibility, his protecting hand over the poor, and his liberality and piety are all set forth in the *Purananuru* and *Purapporulvenbamalai*. The usual way of calling the attention of the people to what was going on in the king's Court was by the beating of drums. Great importance was attached to the drum, which was kept in the precincts of every king's palace, and was treated almost as a minor deity. It was made to rest upon a luxurious, richly ornamented, and cushioned couch being constantly cleansed, rubbed with perfumed earth, and covered with wreaths of flowers. On special occasions it was carried on the back of the stateliest of elephants. The kings had three kinds of drums hnown as the war-drum (* Viramurasam, வீரமுரசம்), the justice-drum (Neethimurasam, நீதிமுரசம்), and the gift-drum (Kodaimurasam, கொடைமுரசம்). They

* *Vide Purananuru*, Verses 279 and 89.

were symbolical of the three great virtues of heroism, justice, and charity that distinguished every Tamil sovereign. When these drums were beaten, they would sound differently. Then the people knew for what they were sounded. The royal umbrella was regarded as symbolical of the protection given to the subjects by the king.

The king's position in the early centuries of the Christian era was hereditary. Sometimes it was elective. A prince who distinguished himself in war by feats of valour might be elected by the warriors as king. The king was the head of society. He was the supreme priest, the first to offer sacrifices, when seasons failed. He was the supreme commander. He exercised vast powers in matters of war and peace. He was also the supreme judge in civil and criminal cases. We have interesting details as regards the administration of justice in that remote age. There is a reference to the peculiar course Karikal Chola adopted on one occasion. Two persons had a disagreement, and when Karikal Chola who was in his youth attempted to settle their dispute for them, they replied that he was too young to thoroughly investigate the cause of their dispute, whereupon he seemed to have disguised himself, and in the shape of an old man came and heard the whole matter, and

decided it to their satisfaction. A thief arrested with stolen property was beheaded. A man caught in the act of adultery was killed. One who had trespassed into another's dwelling with the intention of committing adultery had his legs cut off. "Spying was visited with capital punishment. Sometimes the unfortunate victims to the king's wrath were trodden down by elephants. When innocent people were brought as suspects and given punishments, the poets interceded on their behalf, and saved them from the clutches of the law." * Justice was administered free of charge to suitors. There were special officers who performed the duties of judges. The presiding judge in each court wore a peculiar headgear, by which he was distinguished from other officers of the court.

Crimes were rare not merely because of the severe punishments, but also because of the precautions of the government. From *Maduraikkanchi*, we learn that, on the principle, 'set a thief to catch a thief,' the king appointed watchmen well-versed in all the arts of theft. Dexterity and fearlessness were their great virtues. They roamed quite fearlessly in the streets in spite of heavy rains and floods like tigers in search of prey. They peeped slyly into the rendezvous of crafty

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* **Purananuru, Stanzas 46 and 47.**

thieves and robbers. A very graphic description of an accomplished robber is given in the epic *Silappathikaram.* Theft should have risen to a fine art in those days. But for the appointment of guards who knew all the ins and outs of the art of theft, the people's property should have been in great danger of being stolen. The complexion of the arch-thief was jet-black, which merged with darkness and made him quite invisible in the dark ; he had a spade with which he could split rocks and planks ; he had also got a sword to serve him in self-defence, if caught ; his feet were protected by shoes probably to escape detection from foot-steps ; he was clad in a soft cloth of jet-black hue ; a rope made of cotton fibres with a clip at one end served him as a ladder to climb up any wall, and this was wound round his waist. His eyes rolled slyly in search of jewels and treasure ; he was so dexterous that, when detected, he could hide himself within the twinkling of an eye. The guardsmen, who were a terror to the burglars, were noted for their undaunted courage and detective skill that had won for them the approbation of the wise.

Though the king was the repository of the executive and judicial powers, these powers were harmoniously combined in him.

He carried out the law which had been formulated by the great men who had gone before him. His function was to administer, but not to make the law. The king was not an autocrat, but a constitutional ruler. The principal officers of State, who assisted the king in his work of government, were the high priest, the chief astrologer, the ministers, and the commanders of the army.

As the eyes of a king are his own ministers, he should use his discretion, and choose them wisely. The minister should be a man of affairs, clever, pure-minded, devoted to the king and skilful in reading the hearts of men. The man, who is able to develop the resources of the kingdom, and cure the ills that may befall it, should be entrusted with the management of the affairs of State. The man, who is endowed with kindness, intelligence, decision, and who is free from greed, should be selected for service. Work should be entrusted to men in consideration of their expert knowledge and capacity for patient exertion, and not because of their love towards the person of the king. The prosperity of the king who will not take counsel with his councillors will wane.

A kind heart, high birth, and manners that captivate kings—these are the qualifications of the ambassador. A loving nature, a

wise understanding, and skill in speech, these three are indispensable to the envoy. Intelligence, learning, a commanding presence, conciseness of speech, sweetness of tongue, a careful eschewing of all disagreeable language, firmness of mind, purity of heart, engaging manners, these are the other requisites of an envoy. He is the fittest ambassador who has a just eye for time and place, who knows his duty, and who weighs his words before uttering them. Even when threatened with death, the perfect ambassador will not fail in his duty, but will endeavour to secure his master's profit. The poetess Auvaiyar, the Tamilian Sapho, possessed these qualifications in a pre-eminent degree. She was gifted with high political wisdom, and in an important embassy to Tondaiman of Kanchi was sent by her patron, AthiyamanNedumanAnchi.

The author of the *Kural* is aware of the dangers of incompetence on the part of the monarch. The sovereignty of the king, who does not oversee the administration every day, and remove the irregularities, will wear day by day. The evils of tyranny have not escaped the penetrating eye of the immortal author of the *Kural*. The king, who oppresses his subjects and does iniquity, is worse than an assassin. The thoughtless king, whose rule

swerves from the ways of justice, will lose his kingdom and his substance. We know for instance from the *Silappathikaram* the tragic end of Pandyan Neduncheliyan, when he realised that he had unjustly put to death Kovalan. When the king committed suicide he let fall these heart-rending and memorable words :—'No king am I who believed the words of my goldsmith. I am the thief. I have done an act which sullies the fair fame of the long line of kings who ruled the southern land. Better to die, than to bear this disgrace.' The tears of those groaning under oppression wear away the prosperity of the king. Unjust rule darkens the glory of the king. Repression of the rich, forgetfulness by the Brahman of his science, failure of the heavens to send showers in their seasons, premature and abrupt close of the reign, these are the characteristics of tyranny. The government, as described above, seems at first sight to be an unmitigated and uncompromising autocracy. But in reality it is not the case ; for a deeper and more detailed study will show that it is hedged in by diverse restrictions, all of them enforced by the community, which had an organisation to express its will. This organisation was embodied in the king's Council formed of the Five Great Assemblies called *Aimberun-*

gulu (ஐம்பெருங்குழு). The five assemblies, according to an unknown commentator of the *Silappathikaram* (*Arumbathavuraiasiriyar*, அரும்பத உரையாசிரியர்), consisted of the representatives of the people (மாசனம், Majanam), priests (பார்ப்பார், parpar), physicians (மருத்தர், maruththar), astrologers or augurs (நிமித்தர், Nimithar), and ministers (அமைச்சர், Amaichchar). The assembly of representatives safeguarded the rights and privileges of the people ; that of the priests directed religious ceremonies, that of physicians attended to all matters affecting the health of the king and his subjects ; that of astrologers fixed auspicious times for public ceremonies, and predicted important events. The assembly of the ministers attended to the collection and expenditure of the revenue and administration of justice. Separate places were assigned in the capital town for each of these assemblies for their meeting and transaction of business. But, according to *Adiyarkunallar*, the celebrated commentator of the epic under reference, the assemblies consisted of ministers, priests, commanders (சேனாபதியர், Senapatis), ambassadors (தூதுவர், Thoothuvar), and spies (சாரணர், Charanar). In addition to the Five Great Assemblies, there was another assembly called Enberayam (எண்பே

ாயம்). According to Adiyarkunallar, this body consisted of executive officers (Karanathiyalavar, கரணத்தியலவர்), priests (Karumavithikal, கருமவிதிகள்), treasury officials (கனகச்சுற்றம், Kanakachchurram), palace guard (கடைகாப் பாளர், *Kadaikappalar*), great men of the city (நகரமாந்தர், *Nakaramanthar*), captain of troops (நணிபடைத்தலைவர், *Nanipadaithalaivar*), elephant-warriors (யானை வீரர், *Yanaivirar*), and cavalry officers (இவுளி மறவர், *Evulimaravar*).

According to *Purapporulvenbamalai*, * the member of the king's Council should possess eight qualities, and should always look to success after duly weighing the chances of victory and defeat, and after debating justly the questions raised and the objections urged. The eight qualities of the councillors are stated to be good birth, learning, good character, truthfulness, purity, and the ornament of even-mindedness without being envious and being covetous. These are ideal characteristics, which, if possessed, would bring glory to the land.

According to Mr. R. C. Majumdar, the so-called five assemblies were really the five committees of a great assembly. It is interesting to note also that the ministers formed one of the assemblies. The assemblies taken

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*** Vahaipadalam Chapter VIII, 19.**

together may justly be compared with the Privy Council, the assembly of the ministers corresponding with the Cabinet composed of a selected few.* The representative character of the assemblies and the effective control, which they exercised over the administration, are clearly established. On important occasions, the five assemblies attended the king's levee in the throne hall, or joined the royal procession. The power of government was vested in the king and in the Five Great Assemblies. That these assemblies played not an inconsiderable part in the life of the Tamil States is proved by the references to them in the *Silappathikaram*. In connection with the celebration of the annual festival in honour of God Indra, the members of these assemblies were assigned the duty of bringing water in a golden vessel from the sacred Kaveri. Again, in *Arangerrukathai*,† the members of the Five Great Assemblies are said to have accompanied the royal procession. Again, when Senguttuvan Chera sent his sword in advance before his own departure for the purpose of bringing a stone from the Himalayas, the assemblies are said to have blessed him‡. These few references show that the assemblies were associated with him

* *Vide Corporate Life in Ancient India.*

† *Silappathikaram*, Lines 126-28.

‡ *Kalkotkathai* Chap 26, line 38.

constantly, and that they helped him in the government of the State. The royal administration was carried on not merely with the help of the assemblies, but also with the great officers of state. In a sense, the governmental organisation of the Tamil kingdoms may be said to resemble the system of government that prevailed in England in the Norman period.* Under the Tamil kings, the chief officers of the household, the Priest (ஆசான், *Asan*), the Great Accountant (பெருங்கணி, *Perungani*), the Brahman Judges (அறக்களத் தந்தணர், *Arakkalaththanthanar*), the tax collectors (காவிதி, *Kavithi*), and the Secretary of State (மந்திரக்கணக்கர், *Manthirakkanakkar*) acted in the administration along with the ministers. The commanders of the army formed also part of the organisation of the government. In another place these officers are referred to as † Purohits (கரும வினைஞர்), Accountants (கணக்கியல் வினைஞர்), Judges (தரும வினைஞர்), and Commanders (தந்திர வினைஞர்). Perhaps it was one of the duties of these officers and the assemblies mentioned above to consider on the death of a king what had next to be done, the choice of a successor, even

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* *Silappathikaram* Chap- 22, lines 6-11

† *Silappathikaram*, Chap. 26, *Kalkotkathai*, line 40 Chap. 28 *Nadukalkathai*, lines 222-224.

though the hereditary principle of succession to the throne was in operation among the Tamils, and to make the necessary arrangements for carrying on the administration during the interregnum. On another occasion, the Brahman judges, the priest, the great accountant along with the sculptors and architects were ordered to help in the consecration of a temple to Kannagi. Thus from the *Silappathikaram* as well as from other works of this period, it may be inferred that the assemblies had a recognised standing, and that they were amenable to public opinion.

Besides the constitutional checks explained above, there was an additional safeguard to the wayward actions of the king in the class of poets who were the sages and wise men of those days. They were a privileged class, and they tendered their good counsel without fear or favour, and the king dared not injure them, as their person was considered sacred. For example, Mangudi Maruthanar composed an exquisite idyll known as *Madurai-kkanchi* with a view to impress upon the mind of the Pandyan Neduncheliyan the evanescence of all earthly splendour and the consequent necessity for obtaining a knowledge of the eternal bliss by the performance of holy sacrifices under the auspices and guidance of

Brahman sages of antique celebrity. When an ancient Chola king by name Kopperuncholan was reigning at Uraiyur, his sons unfurled the banner of revolt against him. The irate father prepared to wage war against his own sons. Then a poet of his court appeased his wrath, and dissuaded him from an unnatural war with his sons by reasonable pleading. When the Chola king, Perunarkkilli, performed a *rajasuya* sacrifice, the Tamil kings, warrior chieftains, poets, bards, and minstrels flocked to his metropolis in honour of the occasion. The celebrated Auvaiyar who was present on the occasion availed herself of this golden opportunity to exhort the Tamil kings to be benevolent towards the poor. A poet by name Nariverunthalaiyar exhorted the Chera king to protect his subjects, just as persons would tend babies in their charge. The Purananuru contains stories of poets such as Kabila who acted as arbiters of contending kings.

The ancient Tamil kings realised that the great remedy against famine was irrigation. Very extensive irrigation works were carried out by these rulers, who had at their disposal large treasures and an immense amount of forced labour. The embankment thrown on the Cauvery by Karikal Chola is an instance in

point. A nation or society takes very long before it takes to the culture of the land which is an index of its settled state and a measure of its advanced civilization. In the agricultural stage, as J. S. Mill observes, 'the quantity of human food, which the earth is capable of returning even to the most wretched system of agriculture, so much exceeds what could be obtained in the purely pastoral stage that a great increase of population is invariably the result.' We most authentically learn of the ancient Tamils through their monumental work (*i.e.*) the *Kural*, which according to historical computation is at least 1,800 years old, that they were organised into a nation with its ideas materialised in the advantages of economic self-sufficiency in clothing and food. According to this work, the ancient Tamils had actually solved the puzzle of food problem. Its talented author lays considerable stress on the supreme importance of agriculture to society. The literature, traditions, and customs of the Tamils support the pre-eminent respectability of the calling of husbandry. To the ancient Tamilian, there was indeed nothing nobler than the yoke and the plough, which were to him the true emblems of freedom, honour, and virtue. According to Valluvar, in spite of every hard-

ship; husbandry was the chief industry. 'Husbandmen support all those that take to other work, not having the strength to plough. They alone live who live by tilling the ground.' All others eat only the bread of dependence. The Tamil kings thoroughly understood the importance of agriculture to this land. The writers of the age were also keenly alive to the need for fostering agriculture. In 35, *Purananuru*, the poet exhorts the king to lighten the load of the tillers of the soil. An old lyric (No. 18, *Purananuru*) *says* :

"Then Mighty ruler, listen to my song,
Who give to frames of men the food
They need, these give them life ;—
For food sustains man's mortal frame ;
But food is earth with water blent :
So those who join the water to the earth
Build up the body, and supply its life.
Men in less happy lands sow seed, and watch to skies for rain,
But this can never supply the wants of kingdom and of king.
Therefore, O Cheliyan, great in war, despise this not ;
Increase the reservoirs for water made.
Who bind the water, and supply to fields
Their measured flow, these bind

The earth to them. The fame of others passes
swift away."

The ancient Tamil kings, besides fostering agriculture, devoted their attention to public works. For example, Karikal, the Chola king, turned jungles into populous areas, dug many tanks, and improved in various ways the material resources of his kingdom. He converted Uraiyur, which was before his time in a desolate condition, into a thriving city with an impregnable fortress. There were charity houses, wherein the poor and the needy were fed. Besides, there were charity houses for feeding stray cattle.

The king collected as state revenue one sixth of the produce from the people. The Tamil princes were enjoined not to levy arbitrary taxation. There was a young prince called the learned Pandyan Nambi. He was disposed to be tyrannical. He was advised by the poet Pisiranthayar not to follow evil methods of rule in the following words :

"If an elephant take mouthfuls of ripe grain on it, the twentieth part of an acre will yield it food for many days,
But if it enter a hundred fertile fields with no keeper,
Its foot will trample down much more than its mouth receives.

So if a wise king who knows the path of right take just his due,
His land will prosper yielding myriad fold.
But if a king not softened by his knowledge take just what he desires
Nor heed prescriptions rule, feasting with song and dance
Amid his court and kindred, and show no love to his subjects
Like the field that elephant entered
His kingdom will perish and he himself will lose his all."

The Tamil kings were munificent patrons of learning. But for this unprecedented munificence, the epoch of the Third Sangam would never have witnessed the remarkable outburst of literary and intellectual vitality which we have learnt to associate with 'the Augustan Age of Tamil Literature.' The favourite gifts of Ori, the chieftain of Kolli, a hill in Malabar, to the minstrels who sought his help were caparisoned elephants. The chief gifts of Kari, the feudatory king of Maladu, were decked horses and lands. Kaudamanar, a poet, requested his patron, Palyanaichchelpuhalkuttuvan to enable him to attain *Svargam* (the abode of the celestials). Thereupon, the astounded king conducted holy sacrifices in accordance with vedic rules, and

the Brahman poet is stated to have realised his wish. As an example of the liberality of the Tamil kings, Nannan's treatment of the minstrels who resorted to his court may be cited. The dirty dress, in which the poverty-stricken bard was clad, was removed, and a rich apparel was given to him instead; the bard could remain for any number of days in the court, and meet with the very same courteous treatment given him on the first day of his visit. He could return with the bounties, which Nannan bestowed profusely like the clouds hovering over his hill. The *Pattinappalai* of Kadiyalur Rudirangannanar had a marvellous effect upon the mind of Karikal Chola, who rewarded the poet with one million six hundred thousand *pons* (small gold coins) as recompense.* Tondaman Ilanthiraiyan of Kanchi was very affable to the bards, personally attended upon them during their dinner, and rewarded them with suitable gifts on the very day of their visit. In those days it was usual for a lord, who rewarded the poet who had sung on him, to follow him to a distance of seven steps, when the poet returned home recompensed by him. To the star of the first magnitude in the firmament of Tamil literature of the epoch under review, (*i.e.*) the poetess

* ***Vide Kalingattupparani*, Stanza 185.**

Auvaiyar, was presented by Athiyaman Neduman Anchi, a rare black Nelli fruit (the black gooseberry) which had the virtue of conferring immortality upon the eater thereof. A poet by name Mosikiranar repaired to the Court of the Chera King, Perumcheralirumporai, and feeling tired unconsciously fell asleep on the drum-couch in the palace. The king, who was a great sympathiser, was fanning the sleeping poet, till he got up trembling. The panic-stricken bard was soothed and rewarded beyond his wildest dreams of avarice by the tender-hearted king. The foregoing account will conclusively show that learning was encouraged by the monarchs of those days, and it is no wonder that the Tamilian civilization had attained an unheard of splendour during the early centuries of the Christian era.

Public defence was highly organised. Elephants, spears and swords, bows and arrows, cavalry, infantry, and chariots, all were utilised in war. The arms of a king should be well-organised and puissant. It should contain veterans who could hold out in desperate situations with grim determination regardless of decimating attacks. It should know no defeat, should be incapable of being corrupted, should have a long tradition of valour behind it, and

should face valiantly even the God of Death, if He were to advance agaiust it in all His fury. It should not be inferior in numbers to that of the enemy, should have no implacable jealousies, should not be left to starve without pay, and should be led by capable chiefs. Our ancients knew the different ways of fighting an enemy by siege and in the open battlefield. They employed spies. According to the teachings of the *Kural*, the power of the king, who has tact to convert enemies into allies, will last without end. If he has to contend alone and without allies against two enemies, he must try to gain over one of them to his side. Valluvar says: "Form a wise plan, consolidate thy resources, and provide for thy defences. If you do this, the pride of your enemies will soon be humbled to the dust. They shall not last long who humble not the pride of men who defy them. The king should take into consideration the output, the wastage, the profit that the undertaking will yield, and then put his hand to it. He must weigh justly the difficulty of the enterprise, his own strength, the strength of his enemy, and the strength of his allies, and then he should enter upon it. To make war without planning every detail of it beforehand is only to transplant your enemy on carefully prepared soil. Bend down before

your adversaries till the day of their decline; when that day arrives, you may easily throw them down." Though the ancient Tamils were implacable in their rage, still no one ventured into a war unless forced by sheer necessity and without deeply considering all the horrors of war.

The *Purapporulvenbamalai* presents to us a picture of the political organisation of the ancient Dravidians similar in the main to that delineated by the *Tolkappiyam*. According to it, all their science of public or state affairs was summarised chiefly under the head of war which consisted of various branches. Cattle lifting was the beginning of warfare. The raid was followed by the rescue, and this by the organised invasion of the enemy's country, for which a particular wreath was assumed. This led to the systematic defence, and the defenders assumed a different wreath. The siege and protection of forts, each demanded its appropriate garland. Then came war in general, and for that another wreath was borne. Finally the victors who had gained supremacy had another wreath which they wore as the proud token of victory. This work relates to the expedition in which these eight different chaplets were worn by the combatants according to the character of those undertakings and the feel-

ings of those engaged in them. These garlands were intended to strike awe into the minds of the opposing hosts, and to some extent supplied the place of military uniforms.

The rules of warfare may then be briefly touched upon. The capture of the enemy's cattle was carried out with a view to remove the useful and the sacred animals from the scene of war. The invader was equally humane to the aged, the infirm, the childless, the women, and the Brahmans. The Tamils usually gave instructions to their soldiers thus: 'Touch not the temples where sacrifices are offered; spare the dwellings of the holy ascetics; enter not the houses of the sacred vedic Brahmans.' From stanza 9 of the *Purananuru* we learn something of the humane rules of warfare observed among the ancient Tamils. The Pandyan king, Palyagasalaimudukudumipp eruvaluthi, was about to commence a battle. He advanced with his forces to surprise the owners of the cattle. Before these had time to muster, he uttered the words of warning. The fight would begin, as soon as the warriors assembled for defence; meanwhile he was anxious that there should be no unnecessary bloodshed either of cattle or of non-combatants. The words of warning which he uttered were as follows:—'Ye cows;

ye Brahmans of like sanctity ; ye women ; ye who are suffering from disease ; ye who have not obtained sons of priceless value, whose sacred duty it is to care for those who dwell in the Southern Regions performing on their behalf the sacred rites, we are going to shoot out our swift arrows; therefore, hasten ye to your sheltering fortresses.' In another place, the same king is said to have subdued his various enemies by his true heroism in battles without any foul play or strategem. It is touching to note that the king's sympathy towards his wounded soldiers was unbounded. Thanks to the *Nedunalvadai*, we get a picture of Pandyan Neduncheliyan in encampment at midnight. The king is not confining himself within his tent. He is busy in paying encouraging visits to his wounded soldiers, who fought gloriously for him by cutting down to the ground the ornamented trunks of his enemies' tuskers. The blaze of the torch held near him burns horizontally. The royal umbrella protects him from the arrowy spray of the northern wind. The night garment loosening from his shoulders is held by his left arm, while his right hand rests on the shoulders of his aid-de-camp bearing the royal sword. In this manner, led by the field-marshal, he goes from tent to tent encouraging the wound-

ed by his beaming countenance and sweet words.

But the ancients were merciless to the vanquished. For example, when Karikal Chola invaded foreign territories, he reduced them to desolate regions. Fertile fields and gardens of his foes were turned into wastes overgrown with weeds. The magnificent halls of his enemies became the resort of the ill-omened owls and ghosts of either sex. The massive pillars in these halls became the posts for tying his rut elephants. The spacious kitchens of his foes became the rendezvous of robbers who distributed their booty among themselves, while the wild owls shrieked over their heads. The war usually ended with the death of the king and the overthrow of his kingdom. The inhabitants of the invaded country would flee on every side. The country would be ravaged with fire. 'The beautiful homes with pictured halls are levelled with the dust. Asses are yoked to plough up the soil with spears; while worthless plants are sown on the foundations.' * Thus rages the conquering king. The conqueror is solemnly wedded to the newly acquired country; neighbouring kings bring tribute; and universal submission follows. Dr. G. U. Pope in his introduction to the *Purana-*

* *Vide* Purapporulvenbamalai, verse 120.

nuru asserts that in it there is a note of savage ferocity. The Doctor, when he wrote this, really had in mind the state of the battle-field, where intrepid warriors had clashed at close quarters and the pitiable sight of fortresses that had been razed to the ground or burnt down by the victor which is so beautifully narrated in many of the stanzas of the *Purananuru*. These evils are the inevitable accompaniments of war. Real heroism, chivalry, and valour may be easily mistaken for savagery, and yet it is these that permeate many of the poems of these works.

Such was the system of Government followed in the three great Pandya, Chera, and Chola kingdoms during the early centuries of the Christian era. May we not hope that the Dravidian genius will, as in the past, so in the future, rise equal to the occasion, and solve the many complicated social and political problems which may hereafter press for solution, in a manner not wholly unworthy of its splendid and ennobling record ?